



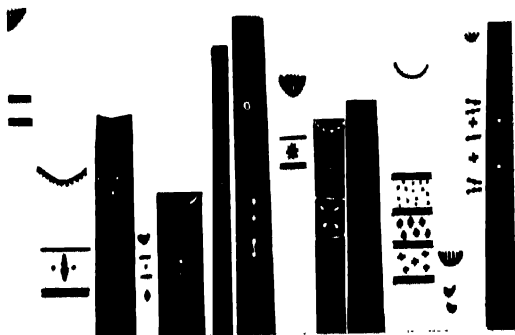
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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

*Three volumes in one*

*VOLUME I*

ASCENT OF MOUNT CARMEL  
DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

*VOLUME II*

SPIRITUAL CANTICLE  
POEMS

*VOLUME III*

LIVING FLAME OF LOVE  
CAUTIONS AND COUNSELS  
SPIRITUAL SENTENCES AND MAXIMS  
LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS  
INDICES

Dear Mr. Fiske

MONS DEI MONS PINGVIS. MONS

BENEPLACITVM EST DEO HABITARE IN EO.

### Camino de spiritus imperfecto

Senda directa dela  
perfeccion  
*Acta est via que ducit  
ad vitam*

## Camino de spiritu errado

*Psalm.*

. LXVII

Las Virreyas siguientes declaran el modo de subir por la senda al Monte de perfeccion, y dar el paso para me ir por las del camino terreno.

**Modo para venir al todo.**

Para uenir alogue no saber  
as de is por donde no sabe  
Para uenir alogue no gual  
as de is por donde no gualta  
Para uenir alogue no por  
as de is por donde no pora  
Para uenir alogue no por  
as de is por donde no pora

### Modo de tener al todo

Para non os fadardes todo  
no que vos fadardes algo en nada  
Para non os agustardes todo  
no que vos agustardes algo en nada  
Para non os lopezardes todo  
no que vos lopezardes algo en nada  
Para non os afadardes todo  
no que vos afadardes algo en nada

Modo para no impedir  
al todo.

Quando separas en algo  
 de lo que atajastes al todo.  
 Por que para uosar de todo  
 as de dozes del todo asado.  
 Quando lo uosas todo atajar  
 as de doze sin nada quier.  
 Porque si quieris tener algo en todo  
 no tornas puto en Dios ni te fers.

Indicio deque se  
tiene todo.

En esta desfructa halla el  
 espíritu quietud, y descanso:  
 porque como nada codicia, nada  
 le compelle hacia arriba, y nada  
 le opone hacia abajo, queda  
 en el centro de su humanidad.  
 Que quando algo codicia  
 crea masno se fatiga

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS  
DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

*Translated and edited by*

E. ALLISON PEERS

*from the critical edition of*

P. SILVERIO DE SANTA TERESA, C.D.

THREE VOLUMES IN ONE

THE NEWMAN PRESS  
WESTMINSTER · MARYLAND



## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

### I

FOR at least twenty years, a new translation of the works of St. John of the Cross has been an urgent necessity. The translations of the individual prose works now in general use go back in their original form to the eighteen-sixties, and, though the later editions of some of them have been submitted to a certain degree of revision, nothing but a complete retranslation of the works from their original Spanish could be satisfactory. For this there are two reasons.

First, the existing translations were never very exact renderings of the original Spanish text even in the form which held the field when they were first published. Their great merit was extreme readableness: many a disciple of the Spanish mystics, who is unacquainted with the language in which they wrote, owes to these translations the comparative ease with which he has mastered the main lines of St. John of the Cross's teaching. Thus for the general reader they were of great utility; for the student, on the other hand, they have never been entirely adequate. They paraphrase difficult expressions, omit or add to parts of individual sentences in order (as it seems) to facilitate comprehension of the general drift of the passages in which these occur, and frequently retranslate from the Vulgate the Saint's Spanish quotations from Holy Scripture instead of turning into English the quotations themselves, using the text actually before them.

A second and more important reason for a new translation, however, is the discovery of fresh manuscripts and the consequent improvements which have been made in the Spanish text of the works of St. John of the Cross during the present century. Seventy years ago, the text chiefly used was that of the collection known as the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* (1853), which itself was based, as we shall later see, upon an edition going back as far as 1703, published before modern methods of editing were so much as imagined. Both the text of the *B.A.E.* edition and the unimportant commentary which accompanied it were highly

or edition in question. The editor's notes on the manuscripts and early editions which he has collated will also be found, for the same reason, to be summarized in the introduction to each work; in consulting the variants, the English-reading student has the maximum aid to a judgment of the reliability of his authorities.

Concentration upon the aim of obtaining the most precise possible rendering of the text has led me to sacrifice stylistic elegance to exactness where the two have been in conflict; it has sometimes been difficult to bring oneself to reproduce the Saint's often ungainly, though often forceful, repetitions of words or his long, cumbrous parentheses, but the temptation to take refuge in graceful paraphrases has been steadily resisted. In the same interest, and also in that of space, I have made certain omissions from, and abbreviations of, other parts of the edition than the text. Two of P. Silverio's five volumes are entirely filled with commentaries and documents. I have selected from the documents those of outstanding interest to readers with no detailed knowledge of Spanish religious history and have been content to summarize the editor's introductions to the individual works, as well as his longer footnotes to the text, and to omit such parts as would interest only specialists, who are able, or at least should be obliged, to study them in the original Spanish.

The decision to summarize in these places has been made the less reluctantly because of the frequent unsuitability of P. Silverio's style to English readers. Like that of many Spaniards, it is so discursive, and at times so baroque in its wealth of epithet and its profusion of imagery, that a literal translation, for many pages together, would seldom have been acceptable. The same criticism would have been applicable to any literal translation of P. Silverio's biography of St. John of the Cross which stands at the head of his edition (Vol. I, pp. 7-130). There was a further reason for omitting these biographical chapters. The long and fully documented biography by the French Carmelite, P. Bruno de Jésus-Marie, C.D., written from the same standpoint as P. Silverio's, has recently been translated into English, and any attempt to rival this in so short a space would be foredoomed to failure. I have thought, however, that a brief outline of the principal events in St. John of the Cross's life would be a useful preliminary to this edition; this has therefore been substituted for the biographical sketch referred to.

In language, I have tried to reproduce the atmosphere of a sixteenth-century text as far as is consistent with clarity. Though following the

paragraph divisions of my original, I have not scrupled, where this has seemed to facilitate understanding, to divide into shorter sentences the long and sometimes straggling periods in which the Saint so frequently indulged. Some attempt has been made to show the contrast between the highly adorned, poetical language of much of the commentary on the 'Spiritual Canticle' and the more closely shorn and eminently practical, though always somewhat discursive style of the *Ascent* and *Dark Night*. That the *Living Flame* occupies an intermediate position in this respect should also be clear from the style of the translation.

Quotations, whether from the Scriptures or from other sources, have been left strictly as St. John of the Cross made them. Where he quotes in Latin, the Latin has been reproduced; only his quotations in Spanish have been turned into English. The footnote references are to the Vulgate, of which the Douai Version is a direct translation; if the Authorized Version differs, as in the Psalms, the variation has been shown in square brackets for the convenience of those who use it.

A word may not be out of place regarding the translations of the poems as they appear in the prose commentaries. Obviously, it would have been impossible to use the comparatively free verse renderings which appear in Volume II of this translation, since the commentaries discuss each line and often each word of the poems. A literal version of the poems in their original verse-lines, however, struck me as being inartistic, if not repellent, and as inviting continual comparison with the more polished verse renderings which, in spirit, come far nearer to the poet's aim. My first intention was to translate the poems, for the purpose of the commentaries, into prose. But later I hit upon the long and metrically unfettered verse-line, suggestive of Biblical poetry in its English dress, which I have employed throughout. I believe that, although the renderings often suffer artistically from their necessary literalness, they are from the artistic standpoint at least tolerable.

### III

The debts I have to acknowledge, though few, are very large ones. My gratitude to P. Silverio de Santa Teresa for telling me so much about his edition before its publication, granting my publishers the sole translation rights and discussing with me a number of crucial passages cannot be disjoined from the many kindnesses I have received during my work on the Spanish mystics, which is still proceeding, from himself and from his fellow-Carmelites in the province of Castile.

In dedicating this translation to them, I think particularly of P. Silverio in Burgos, of P. Florencio del Niño Jesús in Madrid, and of P. Crisógono de Jesús Sacramentado, together with the Fathers of the 'Convento de la Santa' in Ávila.

The long and weary process of revising the manuscript and proofs of this translation has been greatly lightened by the co-operation and companionship of P. Edmund Gurdon, Prior of the Cartuja de Miraflores, near Burgos, with whom I have freely discussed all kinds of difficulties, both of substance and style, and who has been good enough to read part of my proofs. From the quiet library of his monastery, as well as from his gracious companionship, I have drawn not only knowledge, but strength, patience and perseverance. And when at length, after each of my visits, we have had to part, we have continued our labours by correspondence, shaking hands, as it were, 'over a vast' and embracing 'from the ends of opposed winds.'

Finally, I owe a real debt to my publishers for allowing me to do this work without imposing any such limitations of time as often accompany literary undertakings. This and other considerations which I have received from them have made that part of the work which has been done outside the study unusually pleasant and I am correspondingly grateful.

E. ALLISON PEERS.

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL.

Feast of St. John of the Cross,

*November 24, 1933.*

NOTE.—Wherever a commentary by St. John of the Cross is referred to, its title is given in italics (e.g. *Spiritual Canticle*); where the corresponding poem is meant, it is placed between quotation marks (e.g. 'Spiritual Canticle'). The abbreviation 'e.p.' stands for *editio princeps* throughout.

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

**D**URING the sixteen years which have elapsed since the publication of the first edition, several reprints have been issued, and the demand is now such as to justify a complete resetting. I have taken advantage of this opportunity to revise the text throughout, and hope that in some of the more difficult passages I may have come nearer than before to the Saint's mind. Recent researches have necessitated a considerable amplification of introductions and footnotes and greatly increased the length of the bibliography.

The only modification which has been made consistently throughout the three volumes relates to St. John of the Cross's quotations from Scripture. In translating these I still follow him exactly, even where he himself is inexact, but I have used the Douai Version (instead of the Authorized, as in the first edition) as a basis for all Scriptural quotations, as well as in the footnote references and the Scriptural index in Vol. III.

Far more is now known of the life and times of St. John of the Cross than when this translation of the *Complete Works* was first published, thanks principally to the *Historia del Carmen Descalzo* of P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, C.D., now General of his Order, and to the admirably documented Life of the Saint written by P. Crisógono de Jesús Sacramentado, C.D., and published (in *Vida y Obras de San Juan de la Cruz*) in the year after his untimely death. This increased knowledge is reflected in many additional notes, and also in the 'Outline of the Life of St. John of the Cross' (Vol. I, pp. xvii-xx), which, for this edition, has been entirely recast. References are given to my *Handbook to the Life and Times of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross*, which provides much background too full to be reproduced in footnotes and too complicated to be compressed. The *Handbook* also contains numerous references to contemporary events, omitted from the 'Outline' as being too remote from the main theme to justify inclusion in a summary necessarily so condensed.

My thanks for help in revision are due to kindly correspondents, too

numerous to name, from many parts of the world, who have made suggestions for the improvement of the first edition; to the Rev. Professor David Knowles, of Cambridge University, for whose continuous practical interest in this translation I cannot be too grateful; to Miss I. L. McClelland, of Glasgow University, who has read a large part of this edition in proof; to Dom Philippe Chevallier, for material which I have been able to incorporate in it; to P. José Antonio de Sobrino, S.J., for allowing me to quote freely from his recently published *Estudios*; and, most of all, to M. R. P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, C.D., and the Fathers of the International Carmelite College at Rome, whose learning and experience, are, I hope, faintly reflected in this new edition.

E. A. P.

*June 30, 1951.*

## PRINCIPAL ABBREVIATIONS

A.V.—Authorized Version of the Bible (1611).

D.V.—Douai Version of the Bible (1609).

C.W.S.T.J.—*The Complete Works of Saint Teresa of Jesus*, translated and edited by E. Allison Peers from the critical edition of P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, C.D. London, Sheed and Ward, 1946. 3 vols.

H.—E. Allison Peers: *Handbook to the Life and Times of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross*. London, Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1953.

LL.—*The Letters of Saint Teresa of Jesus*, translated and edited by E. Allison Peers from the critical edition of P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, C.D. London, Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1951. 2 vols.

N.L.M.—National Library of Spain (Biblioteca Nacional), Madrid.

Obras (P. Silv.).—*Obras de San Juan de la Cruz*, Doctor de la Iglesia, editadas y anotadas por el P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, C.D. Burgos, 1929-31. 5 vols.

S.S.M.—E. Allison Peers: *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*. Vol. I, London, Sheldon Press, 1927; 2nd ed., London, S.P.C.K., 1951. Vol. II, London, Sheldon Press, 1930.

Sobrinó.—José Antonio de Sobrinó, S.J.: *Estudios sobre San Juan de la Cruz y nuevos textos de su obra*. Madrid, 1950.



## AN OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS<sup>1</sup>

1542. Birth of Juan de Yepes at Fontiveros (Hontiveros), near Ávila.

The day generally ascribed to this event is June 24 (St. John Baptist's Day). No documentary evidence for it, however, exists, the parish registers having been destroyed by a fire in 1544. The chief evidence is an inscription, dated 1689, on the font of the parish church at Fontiveros.

- ? c. 1543. Death of Juan's father. 'After some years' the mother removes, with her family, to Arévalo, and later to Medina del Campo.

- ? c. 1552-6. Juan goes to school at the Colegio de los Niños de la Doctrina, Medina.

- c. 1556-7. Don Antonio Álvarez de Toledo takes him into a Hospital to which he has retired, with the idea of his (Juan's) training for Holy Orders under his patronage.

- ? c. 1559-63. Juan attends the College of the Society of Jesus at Medina.

- c. 1562. Leaves the Hospital and the patronage of Álvarez de Toledo.

1563. Takes the Carmelite habit at St. Anne's, Medina del Campo, as Juan de San Matías (Santo Matía).

The day is frequently assumed (without any foundation) to have been the feast of St. Matthias (February 24), but P. Silverio postulates a day in August or September and P. Crisógono thinks February definitely improbable.

1564. Makes his profession in the same priory—probably in August or September and certainly not earlier than May 21 and not later than October.

- 1564 (November). Enters the University of Salamanca as an *artista*. Takes a three-year course in Arts (1564-7).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. x

- 1565 (January 6). Matriculates at the University of Salamanca.
1567. Receives priest's orders (probably in the summer).
- 1567 (? September). Meets St. Teresa at Medina del Campo. Juan is thinking of transferring to the Carthusian Order. St. Teresa asks him to join her Discalced Reform and the projected first foundation for friars. He agrees to do so, provided the foundation is soon made.
- 1567 (November). Returns to the University of Salamanca, where he takes a year's course in theology.
1568. Spends part of the Long Vacation at Medina del Campo. On August 10, accompanies St. Teresa to Valladolid. In September, returns to Medina and later goes to Ávila and Duruelo.
- 1568 (November 28). Takes the vows of the Reform at Duruelo as St. John of the Cross, together with Antonio de Heredia (Antonio de Jesús), Prior of the Calced Carmelites at Medina, and José de Cristo, another Carmelite from Medina.
- 1570 (June 11). Moves, with the Duruelo community, to Mancera de Abajo.
- 1570 (October, or possibly February 1571). Stays for about a month at Pastrana, returning thence to Mancera.
- 1571 (? January 25). Visits Alba de Tormes for the inauguration of a new convent there.
- 1571 (? April). Goes to Alcalá de Henares as Rector of the College of the Reform and directs the Carmelite nuns.
- 1572 (shortly after April 23). Recalled to Pastrana to correct the rigours of the new novice-master, Angel de San Gabriel.
- 1572 (between May and September). Goes to Ávila as confessor to the Convent of the Incarnation. Remains there till 1577.
- 1574 (March). Accompanies St. Teresa from Ávila to Segovia, arriving on March 18. Returns to Ávila about the end of the month.
- 1575-6 (Winter of: before February 1576). Kidnapped by the Calced and imprisoned at Medina del Campo. Freed by the intervention of the Papal Nuncio, Ormaneto.
- 1577 (December 2 or 3). Kidnapped by the Calced and carried off to the Calced Carmelite priory at Toledo as a prisoner.

- 1577-8. Composes in prison 17 (or perhaps 30) stanzas of the 'Spiritual Canticle' (i.e., as far as the stanza: 'Daughters of Jewry'); the poem with the refrain 'Although 'tis night'; and the stanzas beginning 'In principio erat verbum.' He may also have composed the paraphrase of the psalm *Super flumina* and the poem 'Dark Night.' (*Note*: All these poems, in verse form, will be found in Vol. II of this edition.)
- 1578 (August 16 or shortly afterwards). Escapes to the Convent of the Carmelite nuns in Toledo, and is thence taken to his house by D. Pedro González de Mendoza, Canon of Toledo.
- 1578 (October 9). Attends a meeting of the Discalced superiors at Almodóvar. Is sent to El Calvario as Vicar, in the absence in Rome of the Prior.
- 1578 (end of October). Stays for 'a few days' at Beas de Segura, near El Calvario. Confesses the nuns at the Carmelite Convent of Beas.
- 1578 (November). Arrives at El Calvario.
- 1578-9 (November-June). Remains at El Calvario as Vicar. For a part of this time (probably from the beginning of 1579), goes weekly to the convent of Beas to hear confessions. During this period, begins his commentaries entitled *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* (cf. Vol. I, pp. 9-314, below) and *Spiritual Canticle* (translated in Vol. II).
- 1579 (June 14). Founda a college of the Reform at Baeza.
- 1579-82. Resides at Baeza as Rector of the Carmelite college. Visits the Beas convent occasionally. Writes more of the prose works begun at El Calvario and the rest of the stanzas of the 'Spiritual Canticle' except the last five, possibly with the commentaries to the stanzas.
1580. Death of his mother.
- 1581 (March 3). Attends the Alcalá Chapter of the Reform. Appointed Third Definitor and Prior of the Granada house of Los Mártires. Takes up the latter office only on or about the time of his election by the community in March 1582.
- 1581 (November 28). Last meeting with St. Teresa, at Ávila. On the next day, sets out with two nuns for Beas (December 8-January 15) and Granada.

- 1582 (January 20). Arrives at Los Mártires.
- 1582-8. Mainly at Granada. Re-elected (or confirmed) as Prior of Los Mártires by the Chapter of Almodóvar, 1583. Resides at Los Mártires more or less continuously till 1584 and intermittently afterwards. Visits the Beas convent occasionally. Writes the last five stanzas of the 'Spiritual Canticle' during one of these visits. At Los Mártires, finishes the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and composes his remaining prose treatises. Writes *Living Flame of Love* about 1585, in fifteen days, at the request of Doña Ana de Peñalosa.
- 1585 (May). Lishon Chapter appoints him Second Definitor and (till 1587) Vicar-Provincial of Andalusia. Makes the following foundations: Málaga, February 17, 1585; Córdoba, May 18, 1586; La Manchuela (de Jaén), October 12, 1586; Caravaca, December 18, 1586; Bujalance, June 24, 1587.
- 1587 (April). Chapter of Valladolid re-appoints him Prior of Los Mártires. He ceases to be Definitor and Vicar-Provincial.
- 1588 (June 19). Attends the first Chapter-General of the Reform in Madrid. Is elected First Definitor and a *consiliario*.
- 1588 (August 10). Becomes Prior of Segovia, the central house of the Reform and the headquarters of the Consulta. Acts as deputy for the Vicar-General, P. Doria, during the latter's absences.
- 1590 (June 10). Re-elected First Definitor and a *consiliario* at the Chapter-General Extraordinary, Madrid.
- 1591 (June 1). The Madrid Chapter-General deprives him of his offices and resolves to send him to Mexico. (This latter decision was later revoked.)
- 1591 (August 10). Arrives at La Peñuela.
- 1591 (September 12). Attacked by fever. (September 22) Leaves La Peñuela for Úbeda. (December 14) Dies at Úbeda.
- . . . . .
- January 25, 1675. Beatified by Clement X.
- December 26, 1726. Canonized by Benedict XIII.
- August 24, 1926. Declared Doctor of the Church Universal by Pius XI.

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKS OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

## I

### DATES AND METHODS OF COMPOSITION. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

WITH regard to the times and places at which the works of St. John of the Cross were written, and also with regard to the number of these works, there have existed, from a very early date, considerable differences of opinion. Of internal evidence from the Saint's own writings there is practically none, and such external testimony as can be found in contemporary documents needs very careful examination.

There was no period in the life of St. John of the Cross in which he devoted himself entirely to writing. He does not, in fact, appear to have felt any inclination to do so: his books were written in response to the insistent and repeated demands of his spiritual children. He was very much addicted, on the other hand, to the composition of apothegms or maxims for the use of his penitents and this custom he probably began as early as the days in which he was confessor to the Convent of the Incarnation at Ávila, though his biographers have no record of any maxims but those written at Beas. One of his best beloved daughters, however, Ana María de Jesús, of the Convent of the Incarnation, declared in her deposition, during the process of the Saint's canonization, that he was accustomed to 'comfort those with whom he had to do, both by his words and by his letters, of which this witness received a number, and also by certain papers concerning holy things which this witness would greatly value if she still had them.' Considering the number of nuns to whom the Saint was director at Ávila, it is to be presumed that M. Ana María was not the only person whom he favoured. We may safely conclude, indeed, that there were many others who shared the same privileges, and that, had we all these 'papers,' they would comprise a large volume, instead of the few pages reproduced elsewhere in this translation.

There is a well-known story, preserved in the documents of the

canonization process, of how, on a December night of 1577, St. John of the Cross was kidnapped by the Calced Carmelites of Ávila and carried off from the Incarnation to their priory.<sup>1</sup> Realizing that he had left behind him some important papers, he contrived, on the next morning, to escape, and returned to the Incarnation to destroy them while there was time to do so. He was missed almost immediately and he had hardly gained his cell when his pursuers were on his heels. In the few moments that remained to him he had time to tear up these papers and swallow some of the most compromising. As the original assault had not been unexpected, though the time of it was uncertain, they would not have been very numerous. It is generally supposed that they concerned the business of the infant Reform, of which the survival was at that time in grave doubt. But it seems at least equally likely that some of them might have been these spiritual maxims, or some more extensive instructions which might be misinterpreted by any who found them. It is remarkable, at any rate, that we have none of the Saint's writings belonging to this period whatever.

All his biographers tell us that he wrote some of the stanzas of the 'Spiritual Canticle,' together with a few other poems, while he was imprisoned at Toledo. 'When he left the prison,' says M. Magdalena del Espíritu Santo, 'he took with him a little book in which he had written, while there, some verses based upon the Gospel *In principio erat Verbum*, together with some couplets which begin: "How well I know the fount that freely flows, Although 'tis night," and the stanzas or *liras* that begin "Whither hast vanished?" as far as the stanzas beginning "Daughters of Jewry." The remainder of them the Saint composed later when he was Rector of the College at Baeza. Some of the expositions were written at Beas, as answers to questions put to him by the nuns; others at Granada. This little book, in which the Saint wrote while in prison, he left in the Convent of Beas and on various occasions I was commanded to copy it. Then someone took it from my cell---who, I never knew. The freshness of the words in this book, together with their beauty and subtlety, caused me great wonder, and one day I asked the Saint if God gave him those words which were so comprehensive and so lovely. And he answered: "Daughter, sometimes God gave them to me and at other times I sought them."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [II., III, ii.]

<sup>2</sup> M. Magdalena is a very reliable witness, for she was not only a most discreet and able woman, but was also one of those who were very near to the Saint and gained most from his spiritual direction. The quotation is from MS. 12,944.

M. Isabel de Jesús María, who was a novice at Toledo when the Saint escaped from his imprisonment there, wrote thus from Cuerva on November 2, 1614. 'I remember, too, that, at the time we had him hidden in the church, he recited to us some lines which he had composed and kept in his mind, and that one of the nuns wrote them down as he repeated them. There were three poems—all of them upon the Most Holy Trinity, and so sublime and devout that they seem to enkindle the reader. In this house at Cuerva we have some which begin:

"Far away in the beginning,  
Dwelt the Word in God Most High." <sup>1</sup>

The frequent references to keeping his verses in his head and the popular exaggeration of the hardships (great though these were) which the Saint had to endure in Toledo have led some writers to affirm that he did not in fact write these poems in prison but committed them to memory and transferred them to paper at some later date. The evidence of M. Magdalena, however, would appear to be decisive. We know, too, that the second of St. John of the Cross's gaolers, Fray Juan de Santa María, was a kindly man who did all he could to lighten his captive's sufferings; and his superiors would probably not have forbidden him writing materials provided he wrote no letters.<sup>2</sup>

It seems, then, that the Saint wrote in Toledo the first seventeen (or perhaps thirty) stanzas of the 'Spiritual Canticle,' the nine parts of the poem 'Far away in the beginning . . .,' the paraphrase of the psalm *Super flumina Babylonis* and the poem 'How well I know the fount. . .'. This was really a considerable output of work, for, except perhaps when his gaoler allowed him to go into another room, he had no light but that of a small oil-lamp or occasionally the infiltration of daylight that penetrated a small interior window.

Apart from the statement of M. Magdalena already quoted, little more is known of what the Saint wrote in El Calvario than of what he wrote in Toledo. From an amplification made by herself of the sentences to which we have referred it appears that almost the whole of

<sup>1</sup> MS. 12,738, fol. 835. Fr. Jerónimo de S. José, too, says that the nuns of Toledo also copied certain poems from the Saint's dictation. M. Ana de S. Alberto heard him say of his imprisonment: 'God sought to try me, but His mercy forsook me not. I made some stanzas there which begin: "Whither hast vanished, Beloved"; and also those other verses, beginning "Far above the many rivers That in Babylon abound." All these verses I sent to Fray José de Jesús María, who told me that he was interested in them and was keeping them in his memory in order to write them out.'

<sup>2</sup> [H., III, ii.]

what she had copied was taken from her; as the short extracts transcribed by her are very similar to passages from the Saint's writings we may perhaps conclude that much of the other material was also incorporated in them. In that case he may well have completed a fair proportion of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* before leaving Beas.

It was in El Calvario, too, and for the nuns of Beas, that the Saint drew the plan called the 'Mount of Perfection' (referred to by M. Magdalena<sup>1</sup> and in the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and reproduced as the frontispiece to this volume) of which copies were afterwards multiplied and distributed among Discalced houses. Its author wished it to figure at the head of all his treatises, for it is a graphical representation of the entire mystic way, from the starting-point of the beginner to the very summit of perfection. His first sketch, which still survives, is a rudimentary and imperfect one; before long, however, as M. Magdalena tells us, he evolved another that was fuller and more comprehensive.

Just as we owe to PP. Gracián and Salazar many precious relics of St. Teresa, so we owe others of St. John of the Cross to M. Magdalena. Among the most valuable of these is her own copy of the 'Mount,' which, after her death, went to the 'Desert'<sup>2</sup> of Our Lady of the Snows established by the Discalced province of Upper Andalusia in the diocese of Granada. It was found there by P. Andrés de la Encarnación, of whom we shall presently speak, and who immediately made a copy of it, legally certified as an exact one and now in the National Library of Spain (MS. 6,296).

The superiority of the second plan over the first is very evident. The first consists simply of three parallel lines corresponding to three different paths—one on either side of the Mount, marked 'Road of the spirit of imperfection' and one in the centre marked 'Path of Mount Carmel. Spirit of perfection.' In the spaces between the paths are written the celebrated maxims which appear in Book I, Chapter xiii, of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, in a somewhat different form, together with certain others. At the top of the drawing are the words 'Mount Carmel,' which are not found in the second plan, and below them is the legend: 'There is no road here, for there is no law for the righteous man,' together with other texts from Scripture.

The second plan represents a number of graded heights, the loftiest

<sup>1</sup> MS. 12,944. 'He also occasionally wrote spiritual things that were of great benefit. There, too, he composed the *Mount* and drew a copy with his own hand for each of our breviaries; later, he added to these copies and made some change.'

<sup>2</sup> [See, on this term, *S.S.M.* II, 282, and *Catholic Encyclopedia*, sub. 'Carmelites.']

of which is planted with trees. Three paths, as in the first sketch, lead from the base of the mount, but they are traced more artistically and have a more detailed ascetic and mystical application. Those on either side, which denote the roads of imperfection, are broad and somewhat tortuous and come to an end before the higher stages of the mount are reached. The centre road, that of perfection, is at first very narrow but gradually broadens and leads right up to the summit of the mountain, which only the perfect attain and where they enjoy the *iuge convivium*—the heavenly feast. The different zones of religious perfection, from which spring various virtues, are portrayed with much greater detail than in the first plan. As we have reproduced the second plan in this volume, it need not be described more fully.

We know that St. John of the Cross used the 'Mount' very frequently for all kinds of religious instruction. 'By means of this drawing,' testified one of his disciples, 'he used to teach us that, in order to attain to perfection, we must not desire the good things of earth, nor those of Heaven; but that we must desire naught save to seek and strive after the glory and honour of God our Lord in all things . . . and this "Mount of Perfection" the said holy father himself expounded to this witness when he was his superior in the said priory of Granada.'<sup>1</sup>

It seems not improbable that the Saint continued writing chapters of the *Ascent* and the *Spiritual Canticle* while he was Rector at Baeza,<sup>2</sup> whether in the College itself, or in El Castellar, where he was accustomed often to go into retreat. It was certainly here that he wrote the remaining stanzas of the *Canticle* (as M. Magdalena explicitly tells us in words already quoted), except the last five, which he composed rather later, at Granada. One likes to think that these loveliest of his verses were penned by the banks of the Guadalimar, in the woods of the Granja de Santa Ana, where he was in the habit of passing long hours in communion with God. At all events the stanzas seem more in harmony with such an atmosphere than with that of the College.

With regard to the last five stanzas, we have definite evidence from a Beas nun, M. Francisca de la Madre de Dios, who testifies in the Beatification process (April 2, 1618) as follows:

And so, when the said holy friar John of the Cross was in this convent one Lent (for his great love for it brought him here from the said city of Granada, where he was prior, to confess the nuns and preach to them) he was preaching to them one day in the parlour, and this witness observed that on two separate occasions he was rapt and lifted up from the ground; and when he

<sup>1</sup> Fray Martín de San José in MS. 12,738, fol. 125.

<sup>2</sup> [H., IV, i.]

harmony and unity to both the ascetic and the mystical work of St. John of the Cross—that is to say, to all his scientific writing.

Deeply, however, as St. John of the Cross drew from the Schoolmen, he was also profoundly indebted to many other writers. He was distinctly eclectic in his reading and quotes freely (though less than some of his Spanish contemporaries) from the Fathers and from the mediæval mystics, especially from St. Thomas, St. Bonaventura, Hugh of St. Victor and the pseudo-Areopagite. All that he quotes, however, he makes his own, with the result that his chapters are never a mass of citations loosely strung together, as are those of many other Spanish mystics of his time.

When we study his treatises—principally that great composite work known as the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and the *Dark Night*—we have the impression of a master-mind that has scaled the heights of mystical science and from their summit looks down upon and dominates the plain below and the paths leading upward. We may well wonder what a vast contribution to the subject he would have made had he been able to expound all the eight stanzas of his poem since he covered so much ground in expounding no more than two. Observe with what assurance and what mastery of subject and method he defines his themes and divides his arguments, even when treating the most abstruse and controversial questions. The most obscure phenomena he appears to illumine, as it were, with one lightning flash of understanding, as though the explanation of them were perfectly natural and easy. His solutions of difficult problems are not timid, questioning and loaded with exceptions, but clear, definite and virile like the man who proposes them. No scientific field, perhaps, has so many zones which are apt to become vague and obscure as has that of mystical theology; and there are those among the Saint's predecessors who seem to have made their permanent abode in them. They give the impression of attempting to cloak vagueness in verbosity, in order to avoid being forced into giving solutions of problems which they find insoluble. Not so St. John of the Cross. A scientific dictator, if such a person were conceivable, could hardly express himself with greater clarity. His phrases have a decisive, almost a chiselled quality; where he errs on the side of redundancy, it is not with the intention of cloaking uncertainty, but in order that he may drive home with double force the truths which he desires to impress.

No less admirable are, on the one hand, his synthetic skill and the logic of his arguments, and, on the other, his subtle and discriminating

analyses, which weigh the finest shades of thought and dissect each subject with all the accuracy of science. To his analytical genius we owe those finely balanced statements, orthodox yet bold and fearless, which have caused clumsier intellects to misunderstand him. It is not remarkable that this should have occurred. The ease with which the unskilled can misinterpret genius is shown in the history of many a heresy.

How much of all this St. John of the Cross owed to his studies of scholastic philosophy in the University of Salamanca, it is difficult to say. If we examine the history of that University and read of its severe discipline we shall be in no danger of under-estimating the effect which it must have produced upon so agile and alert an intellect. Further, we note the constant parallelisms and the comparatively infrequent (though occasionally important) divergences between the doctrines of St. John of the Cross and St. Thomas, to say nothing of the close agreement between the views of St. John of the Cross and those of the Schoolmen on such subjects as the passions and appetites, the nature of the soul, the relations between soul and body. Yet we must not forget the student tag: *Quod natura non dat, Salernitica non præstat*. Nothing but natural genius could impart the vigour and the clarity which enhance all St. John of the Cross's arguments and nothing but his own deep and varied experience could have made him what he may well be termed—the greatest psychologist in the history of mysticism.

Eminent, too, was St. John of the Cross in sacred theology. The close natural connection that exists between dogmatic and mystical theology and their continual interdependence in practice make it impossible for a Christian teacher to excel in the latter alone. Indeed, more than one of the heresies that have had their beginnings in mysticism would never have developed had those who fell into them been well grounded in dogmatic theology. The one is, as it were, the lantern that lights the path of the other, as St. Teresa realized when she began to feel the continual necessity of consulting theological teachers. If St. John of the Cross is able to climb the greatest heights of mysticism and remain upon them without stumbling or dizziness it is because his feet are invariably well shod with the truths of dogmatic theology. The great mysteries—those of the Trinity, the Creation, the Incarnation and the Redemption—and such dogmas as those concerning grace, the gifts of the Spirit, the theological virtues, etc., were to him guide-posts for those who attempted to scale, and to lead others to scale, the symbolic mount of sanctity.

It will be remembered that the Saint spent but one year upon his theological course at the University of Salamanca, for which reason many have been surprised at the evident solidity of his attainments. But, apart from the fact that a mind so keen and retentive as that of Fray Juan de San Matías could absorb in a year what others would have failed to imbibe in the more usual two or three, we must of necessity assume a far longer time spent in private study. For in one year he could not have studied all the treatises of which he clearly demonstrates his knowledge—to say nothing of many others which he must have known. His own works, apart from any external evidence, prove him to have been a theologian of distinction.

In both fields, the dogmatic and the mystical, he was greatly aided by his knowledge of Holy Scripture, which he studied continually, in the last years of his life, to the exclusion, as it would seem, of all else. Much of it he knew by heart; the simple devotional talks that he was accustomed to give were invariably studded with texts, and he made use of passages from the Bible both to justify and to illustrate his teaching. In the mystical interpretation of Holy Scripture, as every student of mysticism knows, he has had few equals even among his fellow Doctors of the Church Universal.

Testimonies to his mastery of the Scriptures can be found in abundance. P. Alonso de la Madre de Dios, *el Asturicense*, for example, who was personally acquainted with him, stated in 1603 that 'he had a great gift and facility for the exposition of the Sacred Scripture, principally of the Song of Songs, Ecclesiasticus, Ecclesiastes, the Proverbs and the Psalms of David.'<sup>1</sup> His spiritual daughter, that same Magdalena del Espíritu Santo to whom we have several times referred, affirms that St. John of the Cross would frequently read the Gospels to the nuns of Beas and expound the letter and the spirit to them.<sup>2</sup> Fray Juan Evangelista says in a well-known passage:

He was very fond of reading in the Scriptures, and I never once saw him read any other books than the Bible,<sup>3</sup> almost all of which he knew by heart, St. Augustine *Contra Hæreses* and the *Flos Sanctorum*. When occasionally he preached (which was seldom) or gave informal addresses [*pláticas*], as he more commonly did, he never read from any book save the Bible. His conversation, whether at recreation or at other times, was continually of

<sup>1</sup> MS. 12,738, fol. 3. Cf. a letter of April 28, 1614, by the same friar (*ibid.*, fol. 865), which describes the Saint's knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and skill in expounding them, as 'inspired' and 'Divine.'

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Jerónimo de la Cruz (*ibid.*, fol. 639) describes the Saint on his journeys as 'frequently reading the Bible' as he went along on his 'beast.'

God, and he spoke so delightfully that, when he discoursed upon sacred things at recreation, he would make us all laugh and we used greatly to enjoy going out. On occasions when we held chapters, he would usually give devotional addresses (*pláticas divinas*) after supper, and he never failed to give an address every night.<sup>1</sup>

Fray Pablo de Santa María, who had also heard the Saint's addresses, wrote thus :

He was a man of the most enkindled spirituality and of great insight into all that concerns mystical theology and matters of prayer; I consider it impossible that he could have spoken so well about all the virtues if he had not been most proficient in the spiritual life, and I really think he knew the whole Bible by heart, so far as one could judge from the various Biblical passages which he would quote at chapters and in the refectory, without any great effort, but as one who goes where the Spirit leads him.<sup>2</sup>

Nor was this admiration for the expository ability of St. John of the Cross confined to his fellow-friars, who might easily enough have been led into hero-worship. We know that he was thought highly of in this respect by the University of Alcalá de Henares, where he was consulted as an authority. A Dr. Villegas, Canon of Segovia Cathedral, has left on record his respect for him. And Fray Jerónimo de San José relates the esteem in which he was held at the University of Baeza, which in his day enjoyed a considerable reputation for Biblical studies :

There were at that time at the University of Baeza many learned and spiritually minded persons, disciples of that great father and apostle Juan de Avila.<sup>3</sup> . . . All these doctors . . . would repair to our venerable father as to an oracle from heaven and would discuss with him both their own spiritual progress and that of souls committed to their charge, with the result that they were both edified and astonished at his skill. They would also bring him difficulties and delicate points connected with Divine letters, and on these, too, he spoke with extraordinary energy and illumination. One of these doctors, who had consulted him and listened to him on various occasions, said that, although he had read deeply in St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom and other saints, and had found in them greater heights and depths, he had found in none of them that particular kind of spirituality in exposition which this great father applied to Scriptural passages.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. 12,738, fol. 559. P. Alonso writes similarly in a letter to Fray Jerónimo de San José: 'And in this matter of speaking of God and expounding passages from Scripture he made everyone marvel, for they never asked him about a passage which he could not explain in great detail, and sometimes at recreation the whole hour and much more went by in the explanation of passages about which they asked him' (fol. 1,431).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 847.

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. S.S.M., II, 123-48.]

<sup>4</sup> *Vida*, Bk. IV, Chap. xiv, § 1.

The Scriptural knowledge of St. John of the Cross was, as this passage makes clear, in no way merely academic. Both in his literal and his mystical interpretations of the Bible, he has what we may call a 'Biblical sense,' which saves him from such exaggerations as we find in other expositors, both earlier and contemporary. One would not claim, of course, that among the many hundreds of applications of Holy Scripture made by the Carmelite Doctor there are none that can be objected to in this respect; but the same can be said of St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory or St. Bernard, and no one would assert that, either with them or with him, such instances are other than most exceptional.

To the three sources already mentioned in which St. John of the Cross found inspiration we must add a fourth—the works of ascetic and mystical writers. It is not yet possible to assert with any exactness how far the Saint made use of these; for, though partial studies of this question have been attempted, a complete and unbiased treatment of it has still to be undertaken. Here we can do no more than give a few indications of what remains to be done and summarize the present content of our knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

We may suppose that, during his novitiate in Medina, the Saint read a number of devotional books, one of which would almost certainly have been the *Imitation of Christ*, and others would have included works which were translated into Spanish by order of Cardinal Cisneros. The demands of a University course would not keep him from pursuing such studies at Salamanca; the friar who chose a cell from the window of which he could see the Blessed Sacrament, so that he might spend hours in its company, would hardly be likely to neglect his devotional reading. But we have not a syllable of direct external evidence as to the titles of any of the books known to him.

Nor, for that matter, have we much more evidence of this kind for any other part of his life. Both his early Carmelite biographers and the numerous witnesses who gave evidence during the canonization process describe at great length his extraordinary penances, his love for places of retreat beautified by Nature, the long hours that he spent in prayer and the tongue of angels with which he spoke on things spiritual. But of his reading they say nothing except to describe his attachment to the Bible, nor have we any record of the books contained in the libraries

<sup>1</sup> [On this subject cf. P. Crisógono de Jesús Sacramentado: *San Juan de la Cruz*, Madrid, 1920, Vol. II, pp. 17-34 *et passim*.]

of the religious houses that he visited. Yet if, as we gather from the process, he spent little more than three hours nightly in sleep, he must have read deeply of spiritual things by night as well as by day.

Some clues to the nature of his reading may be gained from his own writings. It is true that the clues are slender. He cites few works apart from the Bible and these are generally liturgical books, such as the Breviary. Some of his quotations from St. Augustine, St. Gregory and other of the Fathers are traceable to these sources. Nevertheless, we have not read St. John of the Cross for long before we find ourselves in the full current of mystical tradition. It is not by means of more or less literal quotations that the Saint produces this impression; he has studied his precursors so thoroughly that he absorbs the substance of their doctrine and incorporates it so intimately in his own that it becomes flesh of his flesh. Everything in his writings is fully matured: he has no *juvenilia*. The mediæval mystics whom he uses are too often vague and undisciplined; they need someone to select from them and unify them, to give them clarity and order, so that their treatment of mystical theology may have the solidity and substance of scholastic theology. To have done this is one of the achievements of St. John of the Cross.

We are convinced, then, by an internal evidence which is chiefly of a kind in which no chapter and verse can be given, that St. John of the Cross read widely in mediæval mystical theology and assimilated a great part of what he read. The influence of foreign writers upon Spanish mysticism, though it was once denied, is to-day generally recognized. It was inevitable that it should have been considerable in a country which in the sixteenth century had such a high degree of culture as Spain. Plotinus, in a diluted form, made his way into Spanish mysticism as naturally as did Seneca into Spanish asceticism. Plato and Aristotle entered it through the two greatest minds that Christianity has known—St. Augustine and St. Thomas. The influence of the Platonic theories of love and beauty and of such basic Aristotelian theories as the origin of knowledge is to be found in most of the Spanish mystics, St. John of the Cross among them.

The pseudo-Dionysius was another writer who was considered a great authority by the Spanish mystics. The importance attributed to his works arose partly from the fact that he was supposed to have been one of the first disciples of the Apostles; many chapters from mystical works of those days all over Europe are no more than glosses of the

they are to-day; most didactic Spanish prose of that period would be notably improved, from a modern standpoint, if its volume were cut down by about one-third.

Be that as it may, these defects in the prose of St. John of the Cross are amply compensated by the fullness of his phraseology, the wealth and profusion of his imagery, the force and the energy of his argument. He has only to be compared with the didactic writers who were his contemporaries for this to become apparent. Together with Luis de Granada, Luis de León, Juan de los Angeles and Luis de la Puente,<sup>1</sup> he created a genuinely native language, purged of Latinisms, precise and eloquent, which Spanish writers have used ever since in writing of mystical theology.

The most sublime of all the Spanish mystics, he soars aloft on the wings of Divine love to heights known to hardly any of them. Though no words can express the loftiest of the experiences which he describes, we are never left with the impression that word, phrase or image has failed him. If it does not exist, he appears to invent it, rather than pause in his description in order to search for an expression of the idea that is in his mind or be satisfied with a prolix paraphrase. True to the character of his thought, his style is always forceful and energetic, even to a fault.

We have said nothing of his poems, for indeed they call for no purely literary commentary. How full of life the greatest of them are, how rich in meaning, how unforgettable and how inimitable, the individual reader may see at a glance or may learn from his own experience. Many of their exquisite figures their author owes, directly or indirectly, to his reading and assimilation of the Bible. Some of them, however, have acquired a new life in the form which he has given them. A line here, a phrase there, has taken root in the mind of some later poet or essayist and has given rise to a new work of art, to many lovers of which the Saint who lies behind it is unknown.

It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that the verse and prose works combined of St. John of the Cross form at once the most grandiose and the most melodious spiritual canticle to which any one man has ever given utterance. It is impossible, in the space at our disposal, to quote at any length from the Spanish critics who have paid tribute to its comprehensiveness and profundity. We must content ourselves with a short quotation characterizing the Saint's poems, taken from the greatest of these critics, Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo,

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. *S.S.M.*, I (1927), 33-76, 291-405; (1951), 25-61, 235-328; II (1930), 109-43.]

who, besides referring frequently to St. John of the Cross in such of his mature works as the *Heterodoxos*, *Ideas Estéticas* and *Ciencia Española*, devoted to him a great part of the address which he delivered as a young man at his official reception into the Spanish Academy under the title of 'Mystical Poetry.'

'So sublime,' wrote Menéndez Pelayo, 'is this poetry [of St. John of the Cross] that it scarcely seems to belong to this world at all; it is hardly capable of being assessed by literary criteria. More ardent in its passion than any profane poetry, its form is as elegant and exquisite, as plastic and as highly figured as any of the finest works of the Renaissance. The spirit of God has passed through these poems every one, beautifying and sanctifying them on its way.'

### III

#### DIFFUSION OF THE WRITINGS OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS—LOSS OF THE AUTOGRAPHS—GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

THE outstanding qualities of St. John of the Cross's writings were soon recognized by the earliest of their few and privileged readers. All such persons, of course, belonged to a small circle composed of the Saint's intimate friends and disciples. As time went on, the circle widened repeatedly; now it embraces the entire Church, and countless individual souls who are filled with the spirit of Christianity.

First of all, the works were read and discussed in those foci of evangelical zeal which the Saint had himself enkindled, by his word and example, at Beas, El Calvario, Baeza and Granada. They could not have come more opportunely. St. Teresa's Reform had engendered a spiritual alertness and energy reminiscent of the earliest days of Christianity. Before this could in any way diminish, her first friar presented the followers of them both with spiritual food to nourish and re-create their souls and so to sustain the high degree of zeal for Our Lord which He had bestowed upon them.

In one sense, St. John of the Cross took up his pen in order to supplement the writings of St. Teresa; on several subjects, for example, he abstained from writing at length because she had already treated of them.<sup>1</sup> Much of the work of the two Saints, however, of necessity

<sup>1</sup> One well-known example will be found in the commentary on the 'Spiritual Canticle,' Chap. xii (cf. p. xlviii, below).

covers the same ground, and thus the great mystical school of the Spanish Carmelites is reinforced at its very beginnings in a way which must be unique in the history of mysticism. The writings of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, though of equal value and identical aim, are in many respects very different in their nature; together they cover almost the entire ground of orthodox mysticism, both speculative and experimental. The Carmelite mystics who came after them were able to build upon a broad and sure foundation.

The writings of St. John of the Cross soon became known outside the narrow circle of his sons and daughters in religion. In a few years they had gone all over Spain and reached Portugal, France and Italy. They were read by persons of every social class, from the Empress Maria of Austria, sister of Philip II, to the most unlettered nuns of St. Teresa's most remote foundations. One of the witnesses at the process for the beatification declared that he knew of no works of which there existed so many copies, with the exception of the Bible.

We may fairly suppose (and the supposition is confirmed by the nature of the extant manuscripts) that the majority of the early copies were made by friars and nuns of the Discalced Reform. Most Discalced houses must have had copies and others were probably in the possession of members of other Orders. We gather, too, from various sources, that even lay persons managed to make or obtain copies of the manuscripts.

How many of these copies, it will be asked, were made directly from the autographs? So vague is the available evidence on this question that it is difficult to attempt any calculation of even approximate reliability. All we can say is that the copies made by, or for, the Discalced friars and nuns themselves are the earliest and most trustworthy, while those intended for the laity were frequently made at third or fourth hand. The Saint himself seems to have written out only one manuscript of each treatise and none of these has come down to us. Some think that he destroyed the manuscripts copied with his own hand, fearing that they might come to be venerated for other reasons than that of the value of their teaching. He was, of course, perfectly capable of such an act of abnegation; once, as we know, in accordance with his own principles, he burned some letters of St. Teresa, which he had carried with him for years, for no other reason than that he realized that he was becoming attached to them.<sup>1</sup>

The only manuscript of his that we possess consists of a few pages

<sup>1</sup> MS. 12,738, fol. 639.

of maxims, some letters and one or two documents which he wrote when he was Vicar-Provincial of Andalusia.<sup>1</sup> So numerous and so thorough have been the searches made for further autographs during the last three centuries that further discoveries of any importance seem most unlikely. We have, therefore, to console ourselves with manuscripts, such as the Sanlúcar de Barrameda Codex of the *Spiritual Canticle*, which bear the Saint's autograph corrections as warrants of their integrity.

The vagueness of much of the evidence concerning the manuscripts to which we have referred extends to the farthest possible limit—that of using the word 'original' to indicate 'autograph' and 'copy' indifferently. Even in the earliest documents we can never be sure which sense is intended. Furthermore, there was a passion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for describing all kinds of old manuscripts as autographs, and thus we find copies so described in which the hand bears not the slightest resemblance to that of the Saint, as the most superficial collation with a genuine specimen of his hand would have made evident. We shall give instances of this in describing the extant copies of individual treatises. One example of a general kind, however, may be quoted here to show the extent to which the practice spread. In a statement made, with reference to one of the processes, at the convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns of Valladolid, a certain M. María de la Trinidad deposed 'that a servant of God, a Franciscan tertiary named Ana María, possesses the originals of the books of our holy father, and has heard that he sent them to the Order.' Great importance was attached to this deposition and every possible measure was taken to find the autographs—needless to say, without result.<sup>2</sup>

With the multiplication of the number of copies of St. John of the Cross's writings, the number of variants naturally multiplied also. The early copies having all been made for devotional purposes, by persons with little or no palaeographical knowledge, many of whom did not even exercise common care, it is not surprising that there is not

<sup>1</sup> To these we shall refer in the third volume of this edition.

<sup>2</sup> If any single person could have spoken from knowledge of this matter it would be P. Alonso de la Madre de Dios, as all papers connected with St. John of the Cross passed through his hands and he took hundreds of depositions in connection with the Beatification process. His statements, however (MS. 19,404, fol. 176 [P. Silverio, I, 179]), are as vague as any others. Rather more reliable are the Saint's two early biographers, P. José de Jesús María (Quiroga) and P. Jerónimo de San José. The former states in one place that he is using an autograph of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, but again it seems likely that he was mistaken, since the archives of the Reform were still intact in the next century and no genuine autograph of any length was found in them.

a single one which can compare in punctiliousness with certain extant eighteenth-century copies of documents connected with St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa. These were made by a painstaking friar called Manuel de Santa María, whose scrupulousness went so far that he reproduced imperfectly formed letters exactly as they were written, adding the parts that were lacking (e.g., the *tilde* over the letter *n*) with ink of another colour.

We may lament that this good father had no predecessor like himself to copy the Saint's treatises, but it is only right to say that the copies we possess are sufficiently faithful and numerous to give us reasonably accurate versions of their originals. The important point about them is that they bear no signs of bad faith, nor even of the desire (understandable enough in those unscientific days) to clarify the sense of their original, or even to improve upon its teaching. Their errors are often gross ones, but the large majority of them are quite easy to detect and put right. The impression to this effect which one obtains from a casual perusal of almost any of these copies is quite definitely confirmed by a comparison of them with copies corrected by the Saint or written by the closest and most trusted of his disciples. It may be added that some of the variants may, for aught we know to the contrary, be the Saint's own work, since it is not improbable that he may have corrected more than one copy of some of his writings, and not been entirely consistent.

There are, broadly speaking, two classes into which the copies (more particularly those of the *Ascent* and the *Dark Night*) may be divided. One class aims at a more or less exact transcription; the other definitely sets out to abbreviate. Even if the latter class be credited with a number of copies which hardly merit the name, the former is by far the larger, and, of course, the more important, though it must not be supposed that the latter is unworthy of notice. The abbreviators generally omit whole chapters, or passages, at a time, and, where they are not for the moment doing this, or writing the connecting phrases necessary to repair their mischief, they are often quite faithful to their originals. Since they do not, in general, attribute anything to their author that is not his, no objection can be taken, on moral grounds, to their proceeding, though, in actual fact, the results are not always happy. Their ends were purely practical and devotional and they made no attempt to pass their compendia as full-length transcriptions.

With regard to the *Spiritual Canticle* and the *Living Flame of Love*, of each of which there are two redactions bearing indisputable marks

of the author's own hand, the classification of the copies will naturally depend upon which redaction each copy the more nearly follows. This question will be discussed in the necessary detail in the introduction to each of these works, and to the individual introductions to the four major treatises we must refer the reader for other details of the manuscripts. In the present pages we have attempted only a general account of these matters. It remains to add that our divisions of each chapter into paragraphs follow the manuscripts throughout except where indicated. The printed editions, as we shall see, suppressed these divisions, but, apart from their value to the modern reader, they are sufficiently nearly identical in the various copies to form one further testimony to their general high standard of reliability.

#### IV

##### INTEGRITY OF THE SAINT'S WORK—INCOMPLETE CONDITION OF THE 'ASCENT' AND THE 'NIGHT'—DISPUTED QUESTIONS

THE principal lacuna in St. John of the Cross's writings, and, from the literary standpoint, the most interesting, is the lack of any commentary to the last five stanzas<sup>1</sup> of the poem 'Dark Night.' Such a commentary is essential to the completion of the plan which the Saint had already traced for himself in what was to be, and, in spite of its unfinished condition, is in fact, his most rigorously scientific treatise. 'All the doctrine,' he wrote in the Argument of the *Ascent*, 'whereof I intend to treat in this *Ascent of Mount Carmel* is included in the following stanzas, and in them is also described the manner of ascending to the summit of the Mount, which is the high estate of perfection which we here call union of the soul with God.' This leaves no doubt but that the Saint intended to treat the mystical life as one whole, and to deal in turn with each stage of the road to perfection, from the beginnings of the Purgative Way to the crown and summit of the life of Union. After showing the need for such a treatise as he proposes to write, he divides the chapters on Purgation into four parts corresponding to the Active and Passive nights of Sense and of Spirit. These, however, correspond only to the first two stanzas of his poem; they are not, as we shall shortly see, complete, but their incompleteness is slight compared with that of the work as a whole.

<sup>1</sup> [The commentary on the third stanza is begun in II, xxv (Vol. I, p. 456, below). If this be not counted, the number of stanzas left uncommented is six.]

Did St. John of the Cross, we may ask, ever write a commentary on those last five stanzas, which begin with a description of the state of Illumination :

'Twas that light guided me,  
More surely than the noonday's brightest glare—

and end with that of the life of Union :

All things for me that day  
Ceas'd, as I slumber'd there,  
Amid the lilies drowning all my care?

If we suppose that he did, we are faced with the question of its fate and with the strange fact that none of his contemporaries makes any mention of such a commentary, though they are all prolific in details of far less importance.

Conjectures have been ventured on this question ever since critical methods first began to be applied to St. John of the Cross's writings. A great deal was written about it by P. Andrés de la Encarnación, to whom his superiors entrusted the task of collecting and editing the Saint's writings, and whose findings, though they suffer from the defects of an age which from a modern standpoint must be called unscientific, and need therefore to be read with the greatest caution, are often surprisingly just and accurate. P. Andrés begins by referring to various places where St. John of the Cross states that he has treated certain subjects and proposes to treat others, about which nothing can be found in his writings. This, he says, may often be due to an oversight on the writer's part or to changes which new experiences might have brought to his mode of thinking. On the other hand, there are sometimes signs that these promises have been fulfilled: the sharp truncation of the argument, for example, at the end of Book III of the *Ascent* suggests that at least a few pages are missing, in which case the original manuscript must have been mutilated,<sup>1</sup> for almost all the extant copies break off at the same word. It is unthinkable, as P. Andrés says, that the Saint 'should have gone on to write the *Night* without completing the *Ascent*, for all these five books<sup>2</sup> are integral parts of one whole, since they all treat of different stages of one spiritual path.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is not so unlikely as it may seem, for the early manuscripts were all either unbound, or very roughly stitched together, and several of the extant copies have leaves missing. It was not till the time of the Beatification Process that greater care began to be taken of the Saint's writings, and they were bound strongly and even luxuriously.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., the three books of the *Ascent* and the two of the *Night*.

<sup>3</sup> MS. 3,180, Adición B.

It may be argued in the same way that St. John of the Cross would not have gone on to write the commentaries on the 'Spiritual Canticle' and the 'Living Flame of Love' without first completing the *Dark Night*. P. Andrés goes so far as to say that the very unwillingness which the Saint displayed towards writing commentaries on the two latter poems indicates that he had already completed the others; otherwise, he could easily have excused himself from the later task on the plea that he had still to finish the earlier.

Again, St. John of the Cross declares very definitely, in the prologue to the *Dark Night*, that, after describing in the commentary on the first two stanzas the effects of the two passive purgations of the sensual and the spiritual part of man, he will devote the six remaining stanzas to expounding 'various and wondrous effects of the spiritual illumination and union of love with God.'<sup>1</sup> Nothing could be clearer than this. Now, in the commentary on the 'Living Flame,' argues P. Andrés, he treats at considerable length of simple contemplation and adds that he has written fully of it in several chapters of the *Ascent* and the *Night*, which he names; but not only do we not find the references in two of the chapters enumerated by him, but he makes no mention of several other chapters in which the references are of considerable fullness. The proper deductions from these facts would seem to be, first, that we do not possess the *Ascent* and the *Night* in the form in which the Saint wrote them, and, second, that in the missing chapters he referred to the subject under discussion at much greater length than in the chapters we have.

Further, the practice of St. John of the Cross was not to omit any part of his commentaries when for any reason he was unable or unwilling to write them at length, but rather to abbreviate them. Thus, he runs rapidly through the third stanza of the *Night* and through the fourth stanza of the *Living Flame*: we should expect him in the same way to treat the last three stanzas of the *Night* with similar brevity and rapidity, but not to omit them altogether.

Such are the principal arguments used by P. Andrés which have inclined many critics to the belief that St. John of the Cross completed these treatises. Other of his arguments, which to himself were even more convincing, have now lost much weight. The chief of these are the contention that, because a certain Fray Agustín Antolínez (b. 1554), in expounding these same poems, makes no mention of the Saint's having failed to expound five stanzas of the *Night*, he did therefore

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. 325, below.

write an exposition of them;<sup>1</sup> and the supposition that the *Living Flame* was written before the *Spiritual Canticle*, and that therefore, when the prologue to the *Living Flame* says that the author has already described the highest state of perfection attainable in this life, it cannot be referring to the *Canticle* and must necessarily allude to passages, now lost, from the *Dark Night*.<sup>2</sup>

Our own judgment upon this much debated question is not easily delivered. On the one hand, the reasons why St. John of the Cross should have completed his work are perfectly sound ones and his own words in the *Ascent* and the *Dark Night* are a clear statement of his intentions. Furthermore, he had ample time to complete it, for he wrote other treatises at a later date and he certainly considered the latter part of the *Dark Night* to be more important than the former. On the other hand, it is disconcerting to find not even the briefest clear reference to this latter part in any of his subsequent writings, when both the *Living Flame* and the *Spiritual Canticle* offered so many occasions for such a reference to an author accustomed to refer his readers to his other treatises. Again, his contemporaries, who were keenly interested in his work, and mention such insignificant things as the *Cautions*, the *Maxims* and the 'Mount of Perfection,' say nothing whatever of the missing chapters. None of his biographers speaks of them, nor does P. Alonso de la Madre de Dios, who examined the Saint's writings in detail immediately after his death and was in touch with his closest friends and companions. We are inclined, therefore, to think that the chapters in question were never written.<sup>3</sup> Is not the following sequence of probable facts the most tenable? We know from P. Juan Evangelista that the *Ascent* and the *Dark Night* were written at different times, with many intervals of short or long duration. The Saint may well have entered upon the *Spiritual Canticle*, which was a concession to the affectionate importunity of M. Ana de Jesús, with

<sup>1</sup> It would be natural enough, of course, for Fray Agustín Antolínez to have noted this fact, but, as he makes no mention of St. John of the Cross at all, nothing can be safely inferred from his silence. It may be added that Fray Agustín's commentary is to be published by the Spanish Augustinians [and that P. Silverio (I, 190-3) gives a specimen of it which shows how well it deserves publication. (Cf. also Vol. II, pp. 20-1, below.)]

<sup>2</sup> As we shall later see, the *Living Flame* was written after the first redaction of the *Spiritual Canticle*, but before the second redaction, which mentions the *Living Flame* in the exposition of Stanza XXXI, thus misleading P. Andrés as to its date. There is no doubt, in our mind, that the reference in the preface to the *Living Flame* is to the *Canticle*: the description fits it exactly.

<sup>3</sup> [P. Silverio's words are: 'For my own part, I think it very probable that he never composed them.' I myself give a little less weight to the negative evidence brought forward, and, though I too am inclined to the negative solution, I should hold the scales between the two rather more evenly.]

every intention of returning later to finish his earlier treatise. But, having completed the *Canticle*, he may equally well have been struck with the similarity between a part of it and the unwritten commentary on the earlier stanzas, and this may have decided him that the *Dark Night* needed no completion, especially as the *Living Flame* also described the life of Union. This hypothesis will explain all the facts, and seems completely in harmony with all we know of St. John of the Cross, who was in no sense, as we have already said, a writer by profession. If we accept it, we need not necessarily share the views which we here assume to have been his. Not only would the completion of the *Dark Night* have given us new ways of approach to so sublime and intricate a theme, but this would have been treated in a way more closely connected with the earlier stages of the mystical life than was possible in either the *Living Flame* or the *Canticle*.

We ought perhaps to notice one further supposition of P. Andrés, which has been taken up by a number of later critics: that St. John of the Cross completed the commentary which we know as the *Dark Night*, but that on account of the distinctive nature of the contents of the part now lost he gave it a separate title.<sup>1</sup> The only advantage of this theory seems to be that it makes the hypothesis of the loss of the commentary less improbable. In other respects it is as unsatisfactory as the theory of P. Andrés,<sup>2</sup> of which we find a variant in M. Baruzi,<sup>3</sup> that the Saint thought the commentary too bold, and too sublime, to be perpetuated, and therefore destroyed it, or, at least, forbade its being copied. It is surely unlikely that the sublimity of these missing chapters would exceed that of the *Canticle* or the *Living Flame*.

This seems the most suitable place to discuss a feature of the works of St. John of the Cross to which allusion is often made—the little interest which he took in their division into books and chapters and his lack of consistency in observing such divisions when he had once made them. A number of examples may be cited. In the first chapter of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, using the words ‘part’ and ‘book’ as synonyms, he makes it clear that the *Ascent* and the *Dark Night* are to him one single treatise. ‘The first night or purgation,’ he writes, ‘is of the sensual part of the soul, which is treated in the present stanza, and

<sup>1</sup> If this were so, we might even hazard a guess that the title was that given in the *Living Flame* (I, 21) and not exactly applicable to any of the existing treatises, viz. *The Dark Night of the Ascent of Mount Carmel*.

<sup>2</sup> *Memorias Historiales*, C. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Saint Jean de la Croix*, pp. 13–15.

## V

HISTORY OF THE PUBLICATION OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS'S  
WRITINGS—THE FIRST EDITION

It seems strange that mystical works of such surpassing value should not have been published till twenty-seven years after their author's death, for not only were the manuscript copies insufficient to propagate them as widely as those who made them would have desired, but the multiplication of these copies led to an ever greater number of variants in the text. Had it but been possible for the first edition of them to have been published while their author still lived, we might to-day have a perfect text. But the probability is that, if such an idea had occurred to St. John of the Cross, he would have set it aside as presumptuous. In allowing copies to be made he doubtless never envisaged their going beyond the limited circle of his Order.

We have found no documentary trace of any project for an edition of these works during their author's lifetime. The most natural time for a discussion of the matter would have been in September 1586, when the Definitors of the Order, among whom was St. John of the Cross, met in Madrid and decided to publish the works of St. Teresa.<sup>1</sup> Two years earlier, when he was writing the *Spiritual Canticle*, St. John of the Cross had expressed a desire for the publication of St. Teresa's writings and assumed that this would not be long delayed.<sup>2</sup> As we have seen, he considered his own works as complementary to those of St. Teresa,<sup>3</sup> and one would have thought that the simultaneous publication of the writings of the two Reformers would have seemed to the Definitors an excellent idea.

After his death, it is probable that there was no one at first who was both able and willing to undertake the work of editor; for, as is well known, towards the end of his life the Saint had powerful enemies within his Order who might well have opposed the project, though, to do the Discalced Reform justice, it was brought up as early as ten years after his death. A resolution was passed at the Chapter-General of the Reform held in September 1601, to the effect 'that the works of Fr. Juan de la Cruz be printed and that the Definitors, Fr. Juan de Jesús María and Fr. Tomás [de Jesús], be instructed to examine and

<sup>1</sup> [H., V, iii.]

<sup>2</sup> *Spiritual Canticle*, Stanza XII, § 6 (Second Redaction, XIII, § 7).

<sup>3</sup> In the same passage as that referred to in the last note he declares his intention of not repeating what she has said (cf. p. xxxvii, above).

approve them.<sup>1</sup> Two years later (July 4, 1603), the same Chapter, also meeting in Madrid, 'gave leave to the Definitor, Fr. Tomás [de Jesús], for the printing of the works of Fr. Juan de la Cruz, first friar of the Discalced Reform.'<sup>2</sup>

It is not known (since the Chapter Book is no longer extant) why the matter lapsed for two years, but Fr. Tomás de Jesús, the Definitor to whom alone it was entrusted on the second occasion, was a most able man, well qualified to edit the works of his predecessor.<sup>3</sup> Why, then, we may wonder, did he not do so? The story of his life in the years following the commission may partly answer this question. His definitorship came to an end in 1604, when he was elected Prior of the 'desert' of San José de las Batuecas. After completing the customary three years in this office, during which time he could have done no work at all upon the edition, he was elected Prior of the Discalced house at Zaragoza. But at this point Paul V sent for him to Rome and from that time onward his life followed other channels.

The next attempt to accomplish the project was successful. The story begins with a meeting between the Definitors of the Order and Fr. José de Jesús María, the General, at Vélez-Málaga, where a new decision to publish the works of St. John of the Cross was taken and put into effect (as a later resolution has it) 'without any delay or condition whatsoever.'<sup>4</sup> The enterprise suffered a setback, only a week after it had been planned, in the death of the learned Jesuit P. Suárez, who was on terms of close friendship with the Discalced and had been appointed one of the censors. But P. Diego de Jesús (Salablanca), Prior of the Discalced house at Toledo, to whom its execution was entrusted, lost no time in accomplishing his task; indeed, one would suppose that he had begun it long before, since early in the next year it was completed and published in Alcalá. The volume, entitled *Spiritual Works which lead a soul to perfect union with God*, has 720 pages and bears the date 1618. The works are preceded by a preface addressed to the reader and a brief summary of the author's 'life and virtues.' An engraving of the 'Mount of Perfection' is included.<sup>5</sup>

There are several peculiarities about this *editio princeps*. In the first place, although the pagination is continuous, it was the work of two different printers; the reason for this is quite unknown, though various

<sup>1</sup> Our authority for this statement is P. Andrés de la Encarnación (*Memorias Historiales*, B. 32), who found the Chapter Book in the General Archives of the Reform at Madrid.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* (B. 33).

<sup>3</sup> [For a study of Tomás de Jesús, see *S.S.M.*, II, 281-306.]

<sup>4</sup> *Memorias Historiales*, B. 35.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. xxiv, above.

reasons might be suggested. The greatest care was evidently taken so that the work should be well and truly approved: it is recommended, in terms of the highest praise, by the authorities of the University of Alcalá, who, at the request of the General of the Discalced Carmelites, had submitted it for examination to four of the professors of that University. No doubt for reasons of safety, the *Spiritual Cantic* was not included in that edition: it was too much like a commentary on the *Song of Songs* for such a proceeding to be just then advisable.

We have now to enquire into the merits of the edition of P. Salablanca, which met with such warm approval on its publication, yet very soon afterwards began to be recognized as defective and is little esteemed for its intrinsic qualities to-day.

It must, of course, be realized that critical standards in the early seventeenth century were low and that the first editor of St. John of the Cross had neither the method nor the available material of the twentieth century. Nor were the times favourable for the publication of the works of a great mystic who attempted fearlessly and fully to describe the highest stages of perfection on the road to God. These two facts are responsible for most of the defects of the edition.

For nearly a century, the great peril associated with the mystical life had been that of Illuminism, a gross form of pseudo-mysticism which had claimed many victims among the holiest and most learned, and of which there was such fear that excessive, almost unbelievable, precautions had been taken against it. These precautions, together with the frequency and audacity with which Illuminists invoked the authority and protection of well-known contemporary ascetic and mystical writers, give reality to P. Salablanca's fear lest the leaders of the sect might shelter themselves behind the doctrines of St. John of the Cross and so call forth the censure of the Inquisition upon passages which seemed to him to bear close relation to their erroneous teaching. It was for this definite reason, and not because of an arbitrary meticulousness, that P. Salablanca omitted or adapted such passages as those noted in Book I, Chapter xiii of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and in a number of chapters in Book II. A study of these, all of which are indicated in the footnotes to our text, is of great interest.

Less important are a large number of minor corrections made with the intention of giving greater precision to some theological concept; the omission of lines and even paragraphs which the editor considered

redundant, as in fact they frequently are; and corrections made with the aim of lending greater clearness to the argument or improving the style. A few changes were made out of prudery: such are the use of *sensitivo* for *sensual*, the suppression of phrases dealing with carnal vice and the omission of several paragraphs from that chapter of the *Dark Night* which speaks of the third deadly sin of beginners. There was little enough reason for these changes: St. John of the Cross is particularly inoffensive in his diction and may, from that point of view, be read by a child.

The sum total of P. Salablanca's mutilations is very considerable. There are more in the *Ascent* and the *Living Flame* than in the *Dark Night*; but hardly a page of the *editio princeps* is free from them and on most pages they abound. It need not be said that they are regrettable. They belong to an age when the garments of dead saints were cut up into small fragments and distributed among the devout and when their cells were decked out with indifferent taste and converted into oratories. It would not have been considered sufficient had the editor printed the text of St. John of the Cross as he found it and glossed it to his liking in footnotes; another editor would have put opposite interpretations upon it, thus cancelling out the work of his predecessor. Even the radical mutilations of P. Salablanca did not suffice, as will now be seen, to protect the works of the Saint from the Inquisition.

## VI

### DENUNCIATION OF THE 'WORKS' TO THE INQUISITION—DEFENCE OF THEM MADE BY FR. BASILIO PONCE DE LEÓN—EDITIONS OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

NEITHER the commendations of University professors nor the scissors of a meticulous editor could save the treatises of St. John of the Cross from that particular form of attack which, more than all others, was feared in the seventeenth century. We shall say nothing here of the history, nature and procedure of the Spanish Inquisition, which has had its outspoken antagonists and its unreasoning defenders but has not yet been studied with impartiality. It must suffice to set down the facts as they here affect our subject.

Forty propositions, then, were extracted from the edition of 1618 and presented to the Holy Office for condemnation with the object of causing the withdrawal of the edition from circulation. The attempt

would probably have succeeded but for the warm, vigorous and learned defence put up by the Augustinian Fray Basilio Ponce de León, a theological professor in the University of Salamanca and a nephew of the Luis de León who wrote the *Names of Christ* and took so great an interest in the works of St. Teresa.<sup>1</sup>

It was in the very convent of San Felipe in Madrid where thirty-five years earlier Fray Luis had written his immortal eulogy of St. Teresa<sup>2</sup> that Fray Basilio, on July 11, 1622, signed a most interesting 'Reply' to the objections which had been raised to the Alcalá edition of St. John of the Cross. Although we propose, in our third volume, to reproduce Fray Basilio's defence, it is necessary to our narrative to say something of it here, for it is the most important of all extant documents which reveal the vicissitudes in the history of the Saint's teaching.

Before entering upon an examination of the censured propositions, the learned Augustinian makes some general observations, which must have carried great weight as coming from so high a theological authority. He recalls the commendations of the edition by the professors of the University of Alcalá 'where the faculty of theology is so famous,' and by many others, including several ministers of the Holy Office and two Dominicans who 'without dispute are among the most learned of their Order.' Secondly, he refers to the eminently saintly character of the first friar of the Discalced Reform: 'it is not to be presumed that God would set a man whose teaching is so evil . . . as is alleged, to be the corner-stone of so great a building.' Thirdly, he notes how close a follower was St. John of the Cross of St. Teresa, a person who was singularly free from any taint of unorthodoxy. And finally he recalls a number of similar attacks on works of this kind, notably that on Laredo's *Ascent of Mount Sion*,<sup>3</sup> which have proved to be devoid of foundation, and points out that isolated 'propositions' need to be set in their context before they can be fairly judged.

Fray Basilio next refutes the charges brought against the works of St. John of the Cross, nearly all of which relate to his teaching on the passivity of the faculties in certain degrees of contemplation. Each proposition he copies and afterwards defends, both by argument and by quotations from the Fathers, from the mediæval mystics and from

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. *S.S.M.*, I (1927), 291-344; (1951), 235-79. An abridged English edition of the *Names of Christ*, translated by a Benedictine of Stanbrook, was published by Messrs. Burns Oates and Washbourne in 1926.]

<sup>2</sup> [Cf. *S.S.M.*, I (1927), 295-6; (1951), 240.]

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. *S.S.M.*, II, 41-76.]

his own contemporaries. It is noteworthy that among these authorities he invariably includes St. Teresa, who had been beatified in 1614, and enjoyed an undisputed reputation. This inclusion, as well as being an enhancement of his defence, affords a striking demonstration of the unity of thought existing between the two great Carmelites.

Having expounded the orthodox Catholic teaching in regard to these matters, and shown that the teaching of St. John of the Cross is in agreement with it, Fray Basilio goes on to make clear the true attitude of the Illuminists and thus to reinforce his contentions by showing how far removed from this is the Saint's doctrine.

Fray Basilio's magnificent defence of St. John of the Cross appears to have had the unusual effect of quashing the attack entirely: the excellence of his arguments, backed by his great authority, was evidently unanswerable. So far as we know, the Inquisition took no proceedings against the Alcalá edition whatsoever. Had this at any time been prohibited, we may be sure that Llorente would have revealed the fact, and, though he refers to the persecution of St. John of the Cross during his lifetime,<sup>1</sup> he is quite silent about any posthumous condemnation of his writings.

The *editio princeps* was reprinted in 1619, with a different pagination and a few corrections, in Barcelona.<sup>2</sup> Before these two editions were out of print, the General of the Discalced Carmelites had entrusted an able historian of the Reform, Fray Jerónimo de San José, with the preparation of a new one. This was published at Madrid, in 1630. It has a short introduction describing its scope and general nature, a number of new and influential commendations and an admirable fifty-page 'sketch' of St. John of the Cross by the editor which has been reproduced in most subsequent editions and has probably done more than any other single work to make known the facts of the Saint's biography. The great feature of this edition, however, is the inclusion of the *Spiritual Canticle*, placed (by an error, as a printer's note explains) at the end of the volume, instead of before the *Living Flame*, which is, of course, its proper position.

The inclusion of the *Canticle* is one of the two merits that the editor claims for his new edition. The other is that he 'prints both the *Canticle* and the other works according to their original manuscripts,

<sup>1</sup> *Historia crítica de la Inquisición de España*, Vol. V, Chap. xxx, and elsewhere. [The original of this work is in French: *Histoire critique de l'Inquisition d'Espagne*, 1817-18.]

<sup>2</sup> Here we have a curious parallelism with the works of St. Teresa, first published at Salamanca in 1588 and also reprinted in Barcelona in the year following.

written in the hand of the same venerable author.' This claim is, of course, greatly exaggerated, as what has been said above with regard to the manuscripts will indicate. Not only does Fray Jerónimo appear to have had no genuine original manuscript at all, but of the omissions of the *editio princeps* it is doubtful if he makes good many more than one in a hundred. In fact, with very occasional exceptions, he merely reproduces the *princeps*—omissions, interpolations, well-meant improvements and all.<sup>1</sup>

In Fray Jerónimo's defence it must be said that the reasons which moved his predecessor to mutilate his edition were still potent, and the times had not changed. It is more surprising that for nearly three centuries the edition of 1630 should have been followed by later editors. The numerous versions of the works which saw the light in the later seventeenth and the eighteenth century added a few poems, letters and maxims to the corpus of work which he presented and which assumed great importance as the Saint became better known and more deeply venerated. But they did no more. It suffices, therefore, to enumerate the chief of them.

The Barcelona publisher of the 1619 edition produced a new edition in 1635, which is a mere reproduction of that of 1630. A Madrid edition of 1649, which adds nine letters, a hundred maxims and a small collection of poems, was reproduced in 1672 (Madrid), 1679 (Madrid), 1693 (Barcelona) and 1694 (Madrid), the last reproduction being in two volumes. An edition was also published in Barcelona in 1700.

If we disregard a 'compendium' of the Saint's writings published in Seville in 1701, the first eighteenth-century edition was published in Seville in 1703—the most interesting of those that had seen the light since 1630. It is well printed on good paper in a folio volume and its editor, Fr. Andrés de Jesús María, claims it, on several grounds, as an advance on preceding editions. First, he says, 'innumerable errors of great importance' have been corrected in it; then, the *Spiritual Canticle* has been amended according to its original manuscript 'in the hand of the same holy doctor, our father, kept and venerated in our convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns at Jaén'; next, he adds two new poems and increases the number of maxims from 100 to 365; and lastly, the letters are increased from nine to seventeen, all of which are found in P.

<sup>1</sup> He also supplies the Latin text of Scriptural quotations which St. John of the Cross gives in the vernacular, corrects the punctuation and spelling of the *princeps* and substitutes his 'Sketch' of the Saint's life for the biographical notes of that edition. The treatise in which he corrects most of the defects of the *princeps* is the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*.

Jerónimo de San José's history. The first of these claims is as great an exaggeration as was P. Jerónimo's; to the second we shall refer in our introduction to the *Spiritual Canticle*. The third and fourth, however, are justified, and for these, as for a few minor improvements, the editor deserves every commendation.

The remaining years of the eighteenth century produced few editions; apart from a reprint (1724) of the compendium of 1701, the only one known to us is that published at Pamplona in 1774, after which nearly eighty years were to pass before any earlier edition was so much as reprinted. Before we resume this bibliographical narrative, however, we must go back over some earlier history.

## VII

### NEW DENUNCIATIONS AND DEFENCES—FRAY NICOLÁS DE JESÚS MARÍA—THE CARMELITE SCHOOL AND THE INQUISITION

WE remarked, apropos of the edition of 1630, that the reasons which led Fray Diego de Jesús to mutilate his texts were still in existence when Fray Jerónimo de San José prepared his edition some twelve years later. If any independent proof of this statement is needed, it may be found in the numerous apologias that were published during the seventeenth century, not only in Spain, but in Italy, France, Germany and other countries of Europe. If doctrines are not attacked, there is no occasion to write vigorous defences of them.

Following the example of Fray Basilio Ponce de León, a professor of theology in the College of the Reform at Salamanca, Fray Nicolás de Jesús María, wrote a learned Latin defence of St. John of the Cross in 1631, often referred to briefly as the *Elucidatio*.<sup>1</sup> It is divided into two parts, the first defending the Saint against charges of a general kind that were brought against his writings, and the second upholding censured propositions taken from them. On the general ground, P. Nicolás reminds his readers that many writers who now enjoy the highest possible reputation were in their time denounced and unjustly persecuted. St. Jerome was attacked for his translation of the Bible from Hebrew into Latin; St. Augustine, for his teaching about grace and freewill. The works of St. Gregory the Great were burned at Rome; those of St. Thomas Aquinas at Paris. Most mediæval and

<sup>1</sup> *Phrasium mysticæ Theologiæ V.P. Fr. Joannis a Cruce, Carmelitarum exalceatorum Parentis primi elucidatiu*. Compluti, 1631.

modern mystics have been the victims of persecution—Ruysbroeck, Tauler and even St. Teresa. Such happenings, he maintains, have done nothing to lessen the eventual prestige of these authors, but rather have added to it.

Nor, he continues, can the works of any author fairly be censured, because misguided teachers make use of them to propagate their false teaching. No book has been more misused by heretics than Holy Scripture and few books of value would escape if we were to condemn all that had been so treated. Equally worthless is the objection that mystical literature is full of difficulties which may cause the ignorant and pusillanimous to stumble. Apart from the fact that St. John of the Cross is clearer and more lucid than most of his contemporaries, and that therefore the works of many of them would have to follow his own into oblivion, the same argument might again be applied to the Scriptures. Who can estimate the good imparted by the sacred books to those who read them in a spirit of uprightness and simplicity? Yet what books are more pregnant with mystery and with truths that are difficult and, humanly speaking, even inaccessible?

But (continues P. Nicolás), even if we allow that parts of the work of St. John of the Cross, for all the clarity of his exposition, are obscure to the general reader, it must be remembered that much more is of the greatest attraction and profit to all. On the one hand, the writings of the Saint represent the purest sublimation of Divine love in the pilgrim soul, and are therefore food for the most advanced upon the mystic way. On the other, every reader, however slight his spiritual progress, can understand the Saint's ascetic teaching: his chapters on the purification of the senses, mortification, detachment from all that belongs to the earth, purity of conscience, the practice of the virtues, and so on. The Saint's greatest enemy is not the obscurity of his teaching but the inflexible logic with which he deduces, from the fundamental principles of evangelical perfection, the consequences which must be observed by those who would scale the Mount. So straight and so hard is the road which he maps out for the climber that the majority of those who see it are at once dismayed.

These are the main lines of P. Nicolás' argument, which he develops at great length. We must refer briefly to the chapter in which he makes a careful synthesis of the teaching of the Illuminists, to show how far it is removed from that of St. John of the Cross. He divides these false contemplatives into four classes. In the first class he places those who suppress all their acts, both interior and exterior, in prayer. In the

second, those who give themselves up to a state of pure quiet, with no loving attention to God. In the third, those who allow their bodies to indulge every craving and maintain that, in the state of spiritual intoxication which they have reached, they are unable to commit sin. In the fourth, those who consider themselves to be instruments of God and adopt an attitude of complete passivity, maintaining also that they are unable to sin, because God alone is working in them. The division is more subtle than practical, for the devotees of this sect, with few exceptions, professed the same erroneous beliefs and tended to the same degree of licence in their conduct. But, by isolating these tenets, P. Nicolás is the better able to show the antithesis between them and those of St. John of the Cross.

In the second part of the *Elucidatio*, he analyses the propositions already treated by Fray Basilio Ponce de León, reducing them to twenty and dealing faithfully with them in the same number of chapters. His defence is clear, methodical and convincing and follows similar lines to those adopted by Fray Basilio, to whom its author acknowledges his indebtedness.

Another of St. John of the Cross's apologists is Fray José de Jesús María (Quiroga), who, in a number of his works,<sup>1</sup> both defends and eulogizes him, without going into any detailed examination of the propositions. Fray José is an outstanding example of a very large class of writers, for, as Illuminism gave place to Quietism, the teaching of St. John of the Cross became more and more violently impugned and almost all mystical writers of the time referred to him. Perhaps we should single out, from among his defenders outside the Carmelite Order, that Augustinian father, P. Antolínez, to whose commentary on three of the Saint's works we have already made reference.

As the school of mystical writers within the Discalced Carmelite Reform gradually grew—a school which took St. John of the Cross as its leader and is one of the most illustrious in the history of mystical theology—it began to share in the same persecution as had befallen its founder. It is impossible, in a few words, to describe this epoch of purgation, and indeed it can only be properly studied in its proper context—the religious history of the period as a whole. For our purpose, it suffices to say that the works of St. John of the Cross were once more denounced to the Inquisition, though, once more, no

<sup>1</sup> *Subida del Alma a Dios; Apología mística en defensa de la contemplación divina; Don que tuvo San Juan de la Cruz para guiar las almas, etc.*

notice appears to have been taken of the denunciations, for there exists no record ordering the expurgation or prohibition of the books referred to. The *Elucidatio* was also denounced, together with several of the works of P. José de Jesús María, at various times in the seventeenth century, and these attacks were of course equivalent to direct attacks on St. John of the Cross. One of the most vehement onslaughts made was levelled against P. José's *Subida del Alma a Dios* ('Ascent of the Soul to God'), which is in effect an elaborate commentary on St. John of the Cross's teaching. The Spanish Inquisition refusing to censure the book, an appeal against it was made to the Inquisition at Rome. When no satisfaction was obtained in this quarter, P. José's opponents went to the Pope, who referred the matter to the Sacred Congregation of the Index; but this body issued a warm eulogy of the book and the matter thereupon dropped.

In spite of such defeats, the opponents of the Carmelite school continued their work into the eighteenth century. In 1740, a new appeal was made to the Spanish Inquisition to censure P. José's *Subida*. A document of seventy-three folios denounced no less than one hundred and sixty-five propositions which it claimed to have taken direct from the work referred to, and this time, after a conflict extending over ten years, the book (described as 'falsely attributed' to P. José<sup>1</sup>) was condemned (July 4, 1750), as 'containing doctrine most perilous in practice, and propositions similar and equivalent to those condemned in Miguel de Molinos.'

We set down the salient facts of this controversy, without commenting upon them, as an instance of the attitude of the eighteenth century towards the mystics in general, and, in particular, towards the school of the Discalced Carmelites. In view of the state and tendencies of thought in these times, the fact of the persecution, and the degree of success that it attained, is not surprising. The important point to bear in mind is that it must be taken into account continually by students of the editions of the Saint's writings and of the history of his teaching throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

<sup>1</sup> This phrase, no doubt, was inserted in order to save the reputation of P. José's earlier supporters, and out of respect to his uncle, who had been a Cardinal and Inquisitor-General.

## VIII

## FURTHER HISTORY OF THE EDITIONS—P. ANDRÉS DE LA ENCARNACIÓN—EDITIONS OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

WHAT has just been said will fully explain the paucity of the editions of St. John of the Cross which we find in the eighteenth century. This century, however, was, scientifically speaking, one of great progress. Critical methods of study developed and became widespread; and there was a great desire to obtain purer and more nearly perfect texts and to discover the original sources of the ideas of great thinkers. These tendencies made themselves felt within the Discalced Carmelite Order, and there also arose a great ambition to republish in their original forms the works both of St. Teresa and of St. John of the Cross. The need was greater in the latter case than in the former; so urgent was it felt to be as to admit of no delay. 'There have been discovered in the works [of St. John of the Cross], 'says a document of about 1753, 'many errors, mutilations and other defects the existence of which cannot be denied.'<sup>1</sup> The religious who wrote thus to the Chapter-General of the Reform set out definite and practical schemes for a thorough revision of these works, which were at once accepted. There thus comes into our history that noteworthy friar, P. Andrés de la Encarnación, to whom we owe so much of what we know about the Saint to-day. P. Andrés was no great stylist, nor had he the usual Spanish fluency of diction. But he was patient, modest and industrious, and above all he was endowed with a double portion of the critical spirit of the eighteenth century. He was selected for the work of investigation as being by far the fittest person who could be found for it. A decree dated October 6, 1754 ordered him to set to work. As a necessary preliminary to the task of preparing a corrected text of the Saint's writings, he was to spare no effort in searching for every extant manuscript; accordingly he began long journeys through La Mancha and Andalusia, going over all the ground covered by St. John of the Cross in his travels and paying special attention to the places where he had lived for any considerable period. In those days, before the religious persecutions of the nineteenth century had destroyed and scattered books and manuscripts, the archives of the various religious houses were intact. P. Andrés and his amanuensis were therefore able to copy and collate valuable manuscripts now lost to us and they at once began

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by P. Andrés de la Encarnación (MS. 3,653, Previo 1).

to restore the phrases and passages omitted from the editions. Unhappily, their work has disappeared and we can judge of it only at second hand; but it appears to have been in every way meritorious. So far as we can gather from the documents which have come down to us, it failed to pass the rigorous censorship of the Order. In other words, the censors, who were professional theologians, insisted upon making so many corrections that the Superiors, who shared the enlightened critical opinions of P. Andrés, thought it better to postpone the publication of the edition indefinitely.

The failure of the project, however, to which P. Andrés devoted so much patient labour, did not wholly destroy the fruits of his skill and perseverance. He was ordered to retire to his priory, where he spent the rest of his long life under the burden of a trial the magnitude of which any scholar or studiously minded reader can estimate. He did what he could in his seclusion to collect, arrange and recopy such notes of his work as he could recover from those to whom they had been submitted. His defence of this action to the Chapter-General is at once admirable in the tranquillity of its temper and pathetic in the eagerness and affection which it displays for the task that he has been forbidden to continue:

Inasmuch as I was ordered, some years ago . . . to prepare an exact edition of the works of our holy father, and afterwards was commanded to suspend my labours for just reasons which presented themselves to these our fathers and prevented its accomplishment at the time, I obeyed forthwith with the greatest submissiveness, but, as I found that I had a rich store of information which at some future time might contribute to the publication of a truly illustrious and perfect edition, it seemed to me that I should not be running counter to the spirit of the Order if I gave it some serviceable form, so that I should not be embarrassed by seeing it in a disorderly condition if at some future date it should be proposed to carry into effect the original decisions of the Order.

With humility and submissiveness, therefore, I send to your Reverences these results of my private labours, not because it is in my mind that the work should be recommenced, or that, if this is to be done, it should be at any particular time, for that I leave to the disposition of your Reverences and of God, but to the end that I may return to the Order that which belongs to it; for, since I was excused from religious observances for nearly nine years so that I might labour in this its own field, the Order cannot but have a right to the fruits of my labours, nor can I escape the obligation of delivering what I have discovered into its hand. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. 3,653, *Previo* 1.

We cannot examine the full text of the interesting memorandum to the Censors which follows this humble exordium. One of their allegations had been that the credit of the Order would suffer if it became known that passages of the Saint's works had been suppressed by Carmelite editors. P. Andrés makes the sage reply: 'There is certainly the risk that this will become known if the edition is made; but there is also a risk that it will become known in any case. We must weigh the risks against each other and decide which proceeding will bring the Order into the greater discredit if one of them materializes.' He fortifies this argument with the declaration that the defects of the existing editions were common knowledge outside the Order as well as within it, and that, as manuscript copies of the Saint's works were also in the possession of many others than Carmelites, there was nothing to prevent a correct edition being made at any time. This must suffice as a proof that P. Andrés could be as acute as he was submissive.

Besides collecting this material, and leaving on record his opposition to the short-sighted decision of the Censors, P. Andrés prepared 'some *Disquisitions* on the writings of the Saint, which, if a more skilful hand should correct and improve their style, cannot but be well received.' Closely connected with the *Disquisitions* are the *Preludes* in which he glosses the Saint's writings. These studies, like the notes already described, have all been lost—no doubt, together with many other documents from the archives of the Reform in Madrid, they disappeared during the pillaging of the religious houses in the early nineteenth century.

The little of P. Andrés' work that remains to us gives a clear picture of the efforts made by the Reform to bring out a worthy edition of St. John of the Cross's writings in the eighteenth century; it is manifestly insufficient, however, to take a modern editor far along the way. Nor, as we have seen, are his judgments by any means to be followed otherwise than with the greatest caution; he greatly exaggerates, too, the effect of the mutilations of earlier editors, no doubt in order to convince his superiors of the necessity for a new edition. The materials for a modern editor are to be found, not in the documents left by P. Andrés, but in such Carmelite archives as still exist, and in the National Library of Spain, to which many Carmelite treasures found their way at the beginning of the last century.

The work sent by P. Andrés to his superiors was kept in the archives of the Discalced Carmelites, but no new edition was prepared

till a hundred and fifty years later. In the nineteenth century such a task was made considerably more difficult by religious persecution, which resulted in the loss of many valuable manuscripts, some of which P. Andrés must certainly have examined. For a time, too, the Orders were expelled from Spain, and, on their return, had neither the necessary freedom, nor the time or material means, for such undertakings. In the twenty-seventh volume of the well-known series of classics entitled *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* (1853) the works of St. John of the Cross were reprinted according to the 1703 edition, without its engravings, indices and commendations, and with a 'critical estimate' of the Saint by Pi y Margall, which has some literary value but in other respects fails entirely to do justice to its subject.

Neither the Madrid edition of 1872 nor the Barcelona edition of 1883 adds anything to our knowledge and it was not till the Toledo edition of 1912-14 that a new advance was made. This edition was the work of a young Carmelite friar, P. Gerardo de San Juan de la Cruz, who died soon after its completion. It aims, according to its title, which is certainly justified, at being 'the most correct and complete edition of all that have been published down to the present date.' If it was not as successful as might have been wished, this could perhaps hardly have been expected of a comparatively inexperienced editor confronted with so gigantic a task—a man, too, who worked almost alone and was by temperament and predilection an investigator rather than a critic. Nevertheless, its introductions, footnotes, appended documents, and collection of apocryphal works of the Saint, as well as its text, were all considered worthy of extended study and the edition was rightly received with enthusiasm. Its principal merit will always lie in its having restored to their proper places, for the first time in a printed edition, many passages which had heretofore remained in manuscript.

We have been anxious that this new edition [Burgos, 1929-31] should represent a fresh advance in the task of establishing a definitive text of St. John of the Cross's writings. For this reason we have examined, together with two devoted assistants, every discoverable manuscript, with the result, as it seems to us, that both the form and the content of our author's works are as nearly as possible as he left them.

In no case have we followed any one manuscript exclusively, preferring to assess the value of each by a careful preliminary study and to consider each on its merits, which are described in the introduction to each of the individual works. Since our primary aim has been to

present an accurate text, our footnotes will be found to be almost exclusively textual. The only edition which we cite, with the occasional exception of that of 1630, is the *princeps*, from which alone there is much to be learned. The Latin quotations from the Vulgate are not, of course, given except where they appear in the manuscripts, and, save for the occasional correction of a copyist's error, they are reproduced in exactly the form in which we have found them. Orthography and punctuation have had perforce to be modernized, since the manuscripts differ widely and we have so few autographs that nothing conclusive can be learned of the Saint's own practice.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [The last two paragraphs form P. Silverio's description of his own edition. The lines followed in the present translation have been described in the Translator's Preface.]



## VOLUME ONE

ASCENT OF MOUNT CARMEL

DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

NIHIL OBSTAT: GEORGIUS SMITH, S.T.D., PH.D.  
CENSOR DEPUTATUS  
IMPRIMATUR: E. MORROGH BERNARD  
VICARIUS GENERALIS  
WESTMONASTERII: DIE XXIV SEPTEMBRIS MCMLII

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# THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

## ASCENT OF MOUNT CARMEL

### INTRODUCTION

As will be seen from the biographical outline which we have given of the life of St. John of the Cross, this was the first of the Saint's treatises to be written; it was begun at El Calvario, and, after various intervals, due to the author's preoccupation with the business of government and the direction and care of souls, was completed at Granada.

The treatise presents a remarkable outline of Christian perfection from the point at which the soul first seeks to rise from the earth and soar upward towards union with God. It is a work which shows every sign of careful planning and great attention to detail; as an ascetic treatise it is noteworthy for its detailed psychological analysis; as a contribution to mystical theology, for the skill with which it treats the most complicated and delicate questions concerning the Mystic Way.

Both the great Carmelite reformers pay close attention to the early stages of the mystical life, beyond which many never pass, and both give the primacy to prayer as a means of attaining perfection. To St. Teresa prayer is the greatest of all blessings of this life, the channel through which all the favours of God pass to the soul, the beginning of every virtue and the plainly marked highroad which leads to the summit of Mount Carmel. She can hardly conceive of a person in full spiritual health whose life is not one of prayer. Her coadjutor in the Carmelite Reform writes in the same spirit. Prayer, for St. John of the Cross as for St. Teresa, is no mere exercise made up of petition and meditation, but a complete spiritual life which brings in its train all the virtues, increases all the soul's potentialities and may ultimately lead to 'deification' or transformation in God through love. It may be said that the exposition of the life of prayer, from its lowest stages to its

highest, is the common aim of these two Saints, which each pursues and accomplishes in a peculiarly individual manner.

St. John of the Cross assumes his reader to be familiar with the rudiments of the spiritual life and therefore omits detailed description of the most elementary of the exercises incumbent upon all Christians. The plan of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* (which, properly speaking, embraces its sequel, the *Dark Night*) follows the lines of the poem with the latter title (p. 10). Into two stanzas of five lines each, St. John of the Cross has condensed all the instruction which he develops in this treatise. In order to reach the Union of Light, the soul must pass through the Dark Night—that is to say, through a series of purifications, during which it is walking, as it were, through a tunnel of impenetrable obscurity and from which it emerges to bask in the sunshine of grace and to enjoy the Divine intimacy.

Through this obscurity the thread which guides the soul is that of 'emptiness' or 'negation.' Only by voiding ourselves of all that is not God can we attain to the possession of God, for two contraries cannot co-exist in one individual, and creature-love is darkness, while God is light, so that from any human heart one of the two cannot fail to drive out the other.<sup>1</sup>

Now the soul, according to the Saint's psychology, is made up of interior and exterior senses and of the faculties. All these must be free from creature impurities in order to be prepared for Divine union. The necessary self-emptying may be accomplished in two ways: by our own efforts, with the habitual aid of grace, and by the action of God exclusively, in which the individual has no part whatsoever. Following this order, the *Ascent* is divided into two parts, which deal respectively with the 'Active' night and the 'Passive.' Each of these parts consists of several books. Since the soul must be purified in its entirety, the Active Night is logically divided into the Night of Sense and the Night of the Spirit; a similar division is observed in treating of the Passive Night. One book is devoted to the Active Night of Sense; two are needed for the Active Night of the Spirit. Unhappily, however, the treatise was never finished; not only was its author unable to take us out of the night into the day, as he certainly intended to do, but he has not even space to describe the Passive Night in all the fullness of its symbolism.

A brief glance at the outstanding parts of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* will give some idea of its nature. The first obstacle which the pilgrim

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent*, Bk. III, Chap. ii.

soul encounters is the senses, upon which St. John of the Cross expends his analytical skill in Book I. Like any academic professor (and it will be recalled that he had undergone a complete university course at Salamanca), he outlines and defines his subject, goes over the necessary preliminary ground before expounding it, and treats it, in turn, under each of its natural divisions. He tells us, that is to say, what he understands by the 'dark night'; describes its causes and its stages; explains how necessary it is to union with God; enumerates the perils which beset the soul that enters it; and shows how all desires must be expelled, 'however small they be,' if the soul is to travel through it safely. Finally he gives a complete synthesis of the procedure that must be adopted by the pilgrim in relation to this part of his journey: the force of this is intensified by those striking maxims and distichs which make Chapter xiii of Book I so memorable.

The first thirteen chapters of the *Ascent* are perhaps the easiest to understand (though they are anything but easy to put into practice) in the entire works of St. John of the Cross. They are all a commentary on the very first line of the poem. The last two chapters of the first book glance at the remaining lines, rather than expound them, and the Saint takes us on at once to Book II, which expounds the second stanza and enters upon the Night of the Spirit.

Here the Saint treats of the proximate means to union with God—namely, faith. He uses the same careful method of exposition, showing clearly how faith is to the soul as a dark night, and how, nevertheless, it is the safest of guides. A parenthetical chapter (v) attempts to give some idea of the nature of union, so that the reader may recognize from afar the goal to which he is proceeding. The author then goes on to describe how the three theological virtues—faith, hope and charity—must 'void and dispose for union' the three faculties of the soul—understanding, memory and will.

He shows how narrow is the way that leads to life and how nothing that belongs to the understanding can guide the soul to union. His illustrations and arguments are far more complicated and subtle than are those of the first book, and give the reader some idea of his knowledge, not only of philosophy and theology, but also of individual souls. Without this last qualification he could never have written those penetrating chapters on the impediments to union—above all, the passages on visions, locutions and revelations—nor must we overlook his description (Chapter xiii) of the three signs that the soul is ready to pass from meditation to contemplation. It may be doubted if in its own

field this second book has ever been surpassed. There is no mystic who gives a more powerful impression than St. John of the Cross of an absolute mastery of his subject. No mistiness, vagueness or indecision clouds his writing: he is as clear-cut and definite as can be.

In his third book St. John of the Cross goes on to describe the obstacles to union which come from the memory and the will. Unlike St. Thomas, he considered the memory as a distinct and separate faculty of the soul. Having written, however, at such length of the understanding, he found it possible to treat more briefly of that other faculty, which is so closely related to it.<sup>1</sup> Fourteen chapters (ii-xv) describe the dark night to be traversed by the memory; thirty (xvi-xlv) the passage of the will, impelled by love.<sup>2</sup> The latter part is the more strikingly developed. Four passions—joy, hope, sorrow and fear—invade the will, and may either encompass the soul's perdition, or, if rightly directed, lead it to virtue and union. Once more St. John of the Cross employs his profound familiarity with the human soul to turn it away from peril and guide it into the path of safety. Much that he says, in dealing with passions so familiar to us all, is not only purely ascetic, but is even commonplace to the instructed Christian. Yet these are but parts of a greater whole.

Of particular interest, both intrinsically and as giving a picture of the Saint's own times, are the chapters on ceremonies and aids to devotion—the use of rosaries, medals, pilgrimages, etc. It must be remembered, of course, that he spent most of his active life in the south of Spain, where exaggerations of all kinds, even to-day, are more frequent than in the more sober north. In any case there is less need, in this lukewarm age, to warn Christians against the abuse of these means of grace, and more need, perhaps, to urge them to employ aids that will stimulate and quicken their devotion.

In the seventeenth chapter of this third book, St. John of the Cross enumerates the 'six kinds of good' which can give rise to rejoicing and sets down his intention of treating each of them in its turn. He carries out his purpose, but, on entering his last division, subdivides it at considerable length and subsequently breaks off with some brusqueness while dealing with one of these sub-heads, just as he is introducing another subject of particular interest historically—namely, pulpit methods considered from the standpoint of the preacher. In all probability we shall never know what he had to say about the hearers of sermons, or what were his considered judgments on confessors and

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent*, Bk. III, Chap. iii, § 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ascent*, Bk. III, Chap. xvi, §§ 1-2.

penitents—though of these judgments he has left us examples elsewhere in this treatise, as well as in others.

We cannot estimate of how much the sudden curtailment of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* has robbed us.<sup>1</sup> Orderly as was the mind of St. John of the Cross, he was easily carried away in his expositions, which are apt to be unequal. No one would have suspected, for example, that, after going into such length in treating the first line of his first stanza, he would make such short work of the remaining four. Nor can we disregard the significance of his warning that much of what he had written on the understanding was applicable also to the memory and the will. He may, therefore, have been nearer the end of his theme than is generally supposed. Yet it is equally possible that much more of his subtle analysis was in store for his readers. Any truncation, when the author is a St. John of the Cross, must be considered irreparable.

### THE MANUSCRIPTS<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately there is no autograph of this treatise extant, though there are a number of early copies, some of which have been made with great care. Others, for various reasons, abbreviate the original considerably. The MSS. belonging to both classes will be enumerated.

*Alba de Tormes.* The Discalced Carmelite priory of Alba de Tormes has a codex which contains the four principal treatises of St. John of the Cross (*Ascent, Dark Night, Spiritual Canticle* and *Living Flame*). This codex belonged from a very early date (perhaps from a date not much later than that of the Saint's death) to the family of the Duke of Alba, which was greatly devoted to the Discalced Carmelite Reform and to St. Teresa, its foundress. It remained in the family until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when it came into the hands of a learned Carmelite, Fray Alonso de la Madre de Dios, who presented it to the Alba monastery on April 15, 1705. The details of this history are given by Fray Alonso himself in a note bearing this date.

For over half a century the MS. was believed to be an autograph, partly, no doubt, on account of its luxurious binding and the respect paid to the noble house whence it came. In February 1761, however, it was examined carefully by P. Manuel de Santa María, who, by his Superiors' orders, was assisting P. Andrés de la Encarnación in his

<sup>1</sup> [On the question of the curtailment of the *Ascent*, see Sobrino, pp. 159-66.]

<sup>2</sup> [On MSS. not described by P. Silverio, see *Ephemerides Carmeliticas*, Florence, 1950, IV, 95-148, and in particular p. 103, n. 9. As the variants and annotations in these MSS. will be of interest only to specialists, and few of them can be reproduced in a translation, those who wish to study them are referred to that article.]

search for, and study of, manuscripts of the Saint's writings. P. Manuel soon discovered that the opinion commonly held was erroneous—greatly, it would seem, to the disillusionment of his contemporaries. Among the various reasons which he gives in a statement supporting his conclusions is that in two places the author is described as 'santo'—a proof not only that the MS. is not an autograph but also that the copyist had no intention of representing it as such.

Although this copy is carefully made and richly bound—which suggests that it was a gift from the Reform to the house of Alba—it contains many errors, of a kind which indicate that the copyist, well educated though he was, knew little of ascetic or mystical theology. A number of omissions, especially towards the end of the book, give the impression that the copy was finished with haste and not compared with the original on its completion. There is no reason, however, to suppose that the errors and omissions are ever intentional; indeed, they are of such a kind as to suggest that the copyist had not the skill necessary for successful adulteration.

*MS. 6,624.* This copy, like the next four, is in N.L.M. [National Library of Spain, Madrid], and contains the same works as that of Alba de Tormes. It was made in 1755, under the direction of P. Andrés de la Encarnación, from a manuscript, now lost, which was venerated by the Benedictines of Burgos: this information is found at the end of the volume. P. Andrés had evidently a good opinion of the Burgos MS., as he placed this copy in the archives of the Discalced Reform, whence it passed to the National Library early in the nineteenth century.

As far as the *Ascent* is concerned, this MS. is very similar to that of Alba. With a few notable exceptions, such as the omission of the second half of Book I, Chapter iv, the errors and omissions are so similar as to suggest a definite relationship, if not a common source.

*MS. 13,498.* This MS., which gives us the *Ascent* and the *Dark Night*, also came from the Archives of the Reform and is now in the National Library. The handwriting might be as early as the end of the sixteenth century. The author did not attempt to make a literal transcription of the *Ascent*, but summarized where he thought advisable, reducing the number of chapters and abbreviating many of them—this last not so much by the method of paraphrase as by the free omission of phrases and sentences.

*MS. 2,201.* This, as far as the *Ascent* is concerned, is an almost literal transcription of the last MS., in a seventeenth-century hand; it was bound in the eighteenth century, when a number of other treatises

were added to it, together with some poems by St. John of the Cross and others. The variants as between this MS. and 13,498 are numerous, but of small importance, and seem mainly to have been due to carelessness.

*MS. 18,160.* This dates from the end of the sixteenth century and contains the four treatises named above, copied in different hands and evidently intended to form one volume. Only the first four chapters of the *Ascent* are given, together with the title and the first three lines of the fifth chapter. The transcription is poorly done.

*MS. 13,507.* An unimportant copy, containing only a few odd chapters of the *Ascent* and others from the remaining works of St. John of the Cross and other writers.

*Pamplona.* A codex in an excellent state of preservation is venerated by the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Pamplona. It was copied, at the end of the sixteenth century, by a Barcelona Carmelite, M. Magdalena de la Asunción, and contains a short summary of the four treatises enumerated above, various poems by St. John of the Cross and some miscellaneous writings. The *Ascent* is abbreviated to the same extent as in 13,498 and 2,201 and by the same methods; many chapters, too, are omitted in their entirety.

*Alcaudete.* This MS., which contains the *Ascent* only, was copied by St. John of the Cross's close friend and companion, P. Juan Evangelista, as a comparison with manuscripts (N.L.M., 12,738) written in his well-known and very distinctive hand, puts beyond all doubt. P. Juan, who took the habit of the Reform at Christmas 1582, knew the Saint before this date; was professed by him at Granada in 1583; accompanied him on many of his journeys; saw him write most of his books; and, as his close friend and confessor, was consulted repeatedly by his biographers.<sup>1</sup> It is natural that he should also have acted as the Saint's copyist, and, in the absence of autographs, we should expect no manuscripts to be more trustworthy than copies made by him. Examination of this MS. shows that it is in fact highly reliable. It corrects none of those unwieldy periods in which the Saint's work abounds, and which the *editio princeps* often thought well to emend, nor, like the early editions and even some manuscripts, does it omit whole paragraphs and substitute others for them. Further, as this copy was being made solely for the use of the Order, no passages are omitted or altered in it because they might be erroneously interpreted as illuministic. It is true that P. Juan Evangelista is not, from the technical standpoint, a

<sup>1</sup> [H., *sub* Juan Evangelista (2)]

perfect copyist, but, frequent as are his slips, they are always easy to recognize.

The Alcaudete MS. was found in the Carmelite priory in that town by P. Andrés de la Encarnación, who first made use of it for his edition. When the priory was abandoned during the religious persecutions of the early nineteenth century, the MS. was lost. Nearly a hundred years passed before it was re-discovered by P. Silverio de Santa Teresa in a second-hand bookshop [and forms a most important contribution to that scholar's edition, which normally follows it]. It bears many signs of frequent use; eleven folios are missing from the body of the MS. (corresponding approximately to Book III, Chapters xxii to xxvi) and several more from its conclusion.

In the footnotes to the *Ascent*, the following abbreviations are used:

A = MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Friars of Alba.

Alc. = Alcaudete MS.

B = MS. of the Benedictines of Burgos.

C = N.L.M., MS. 13,498.

D = N.L.M., MS. 2,201.

P = MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Pamplona.

E.p. = *Editio princeps* (Alcalá, 1618).

Other editions or manuscripts cited are referred to without abbreviation.

## ASCENT OF MOUNT CARMEL

*Treats of how the soul may prepare itself in order to attain in a short time to Divine union. Gives very profitable counsels and instruction, both to beginners and to proficients, that they may know how to disencumber themselves of all that is temporal and not to encumber themselves with the spiritual,<sup>1</sup> and to remain in complete detachment and liberty of spirit, as is necessary for Divine union.<sup>2</sup>*

### ARGUMENT

ALL the doctrine whereof I intend to treat<sup>3</sup> in this *Ascent of Mount Carmel* is included in the following stanzas, and in them is also described the manner of ascending to the summit of the Mount, which is the high estate of perfection which we here call union of the soul with God. And because I must continually base upon them that which I shall say, I have desired to set them down here together, to the end that all the substance of that which is to be written may be seen and comprehended together; although it will be fitting to set down each stanza separately before expounding it, and likewise the lines of each stanza, according as the matter and the exposition require. The poem, then, runs as follows:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A omits: 'and not . . . spiritual.'

<sup>2</sup> So Alc. On his own account P. Juan Evangelista adds: 'composed by P. Fray Juan de la Cruz, Discalced Carmelite.' Other Codices, like Alc., give the name of the author. E.p. alone reads: '*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, composed by the Venerable Father Fr. Juan de la Cruz, first Discalced friar of the Reform of Our Lady of Carmel founded by the virgin Saint Teresa.'

<sup>3</sup> So Alc., e.p.—A, B read: 'All the doctrine which is to be treated.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lir.*: 'It says, then, thus.'] Only Alc. has these words.

STANZAS<sup>1</sup>

Wherein the soul sings of the happy chance which it had in passing through the dark night of faith, in detachment and purification of itself, to union with the Beloved.<sup>2</sup>

1. On a dark night, Kindled<sup>3</sup> in love with yearnings—oh, happy chance!—  
I went forth without being observed, My house being now at rest.<sup>4</sup>
2. In darkness and secure, By the secret ladder, disguised—  
oh, happy chance!—  
In darkness and in concealment, My house being now at rest.
3. In the happy night, In secret, when none saw me,  
Nor I beheld aught, Without light or guide, save that  
which burned in my heart.
4. This light guided me More surely than the light of  
noonday,  
To the place where he (well I knew who!) was awaiting me—  
A place where none appeared.
5. Oh, night that guided me, Oh, night more lovely than  
the dawn,  
Oh, night that joined Beloved with lover, Lover transformed in the Beloved!
6. Upon my flowery breast, Kept wholly for himself alone,  
There he stayed sleeping, and I caressed him, And the fanning  
of the cedars made a breeze.
7. The breeze blew from the turret As I parted his locks;  
With his gentle hand he wounded my neck And caused  
all my senses to be suspended.
8. I remained, lost in oblivion;<sup>5</sup> My face I reclined on the  
Beloved.  
All ceased and I abandoned myself, Leaving my cares  
forgotten among the lilies.

<sup>1</sup> For a verse translation in the metre of the original, see Vol. II, pp. 417-18.

<sup>2</sup> Several editions read: 'to union of love.' E.p., Alc., A, B all have the reading of the text above.

<sup>3</sup> [The adjectives are feminine throughout.]

<sup>4</sup> [The word translated 'at rest' is a past participle: more literally, 'stilled.']

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*: 'I remained and forgot.']

## PROLOGUE

**I**N order to expound and describe this dark night, through which the soul passes in order to attain to the Divine light of the perfect union of the love of God, as far as is possible in this life, it would be necessary to have illumination of knowledge and experience other and far greater than mine; for this darkness and these trials, both spiritual and temporal,<sup>1</sup> through which happy souls are wont to pass in order to be able to attain to this high estate of perfection, are so numerous and so profound that neither does human knowledge suffice for the understanding of them, nor experience for the description of them; for only he that passes this way can understand it, and even he cannot describe it.

2. Therefore, in order to say a little about this dark night, I shall trust neither to experience nor to knowledge, since both may fail and deceive; but, while not omitting to make such use as I can of these two things, I shall avail myself, in all that, with the Divine favour, I have to say, or at the least, in that which is most important and dark to the understanding, of Divine Scripture; for, if we guide ourselves by this, we shall be unable to stray, since He Who speaks therein is the Holy Spirit. And if in aught I stray, whether through my imperfect understanding of that which is said in it or of matters unconnected with it, it is not my intention<sup>2</sup> to depart from the sound sense and doctrine of our Holy Mother the Catholic Church; for in such a case I submit and resign myself wholly, not only to her command,<sup>3</sup> but to whatever better judgment she may pronounce concerning it.

3. To this end I have been moved,<sup>4</sup> not by any possibility that I see in myself of accomplishing so arduous a task, but by the confidence

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'both spiritual and corporeal.' The correction was no doubt made because 'corporeal' is the usual antithesis of 'spiritual'; all the MSS., however, have 'temporal.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. modifies: '... since both may fail and deceive; but to Divine Scripture, for, if we guide ourselves by this, we cannot stray, since He Who speaks therein is the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless I shall make use of these two things—knowledge and experience—whereof I speak. And if in aught I stray, through my imperfect understanding thereof, it is not my intention, etc.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'to her light and command.' A, B: 'to her opinion.' There are slight variations in these last few lines in different MSS. We follow Alc., with which A and B agree very closely.

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'To write this I have been moved.'

which I have in the Lord that He will help me to say something to relieve the great necessity which is experienced by many souls, who, when they set out upon the road of virtue, and Our Lord desires to bring them into this dark night that they may pass through it to Divine union, make no progress. At times this is because they have no desire to enter it or to allow themselves to be led into it; at other times, because they understand not themselves and lack competent and alert directors<sup>1</sup> who will guide them to the summit. And so it is sad to see many souls to whom God gives both aptitude and favour with which to make progress (and who, if they would take courage, could attain to this high estate), remaining in an elementary stage<sup>2</sup> of communion with God, for want of will, or knowledge, or because there is none who will lead them in the right path or teach them how to get away from<sup>3</sup> these beginnings. And at length, although Our Lord grants them such favour as to make them to go onward without this hindrance or that, they arrive at their goal very much later, and with greater labour, yet with less merit, because they have not conformed themselves to God, and allowed themselves to be brought freely<sup>4</sup> into the pure and sure road of union. For, although it is true that God is leading them, and that He can lead them without their own help, they will not allow themselves to be led; and thus they make less progress, because they resist Him Who is leading them, and they have less merit, because they apply not their will, and on this account they suffer more. For there are souls who, instead of committing themselves to God and making use of His help, rather hinder God by the indiscretion of their actions or by their resistance; like children who, when their mothers desire to carry them in their arms, start stamping and crying, and insist upon being allowed to walk, with the result that they can make no progress; and, if they advance at all, it is only at the pace of a child.

4. Wherefore, to the end that all, whether beginners or proficients, may know how to commit themselves to God's guidance, when His Majesty desires to lead them onward, we shall give instruction and counsel, by His help, so that they may be able to understand His will, or, at the least, allow Him to lead them. For some confessors and spiritual fathers,<sup>5</sup> having no light and experience concerning these roads, are wont to hinder and harm such souls rather than to help them

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.* 'and wideawake guides.'] E.p. reads 'skilled,' and B 'prepared,' for 'alert.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'a low manner.']

<sup>3</sup> So e.p. [P. Silverio's text, following Alc., reads: 'disengage themselves from.']

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits 'freely.'

<sup>5</sup> Thus A, B, e.p. Alc. omits: 'confessors and.'

on the road;<sup>1</sup> they are like the builders of Babel, who, when told to furnish suitable material, gave and applied other very different material, because they understood not the language, and thus nothing was done. Wherefore, it is a difficult and troublesome thing at such seasons<sup>2</sup> for a soul not to understand itself or to find none who understands it. For it will come to pass that God will lead the soul<sup>3</sup> by a most lofty path of dark contemplation and aridity, wherein it seems to be lost, and, being thus full of darkness and trials, constraints and temptations, will meet one who will speak to it like Job's comforters, and say that<sup>4</sup> it is suffering from melancholy, or low spirits, or a morbid disposition, or that it may have some hidden sin, and that it is for this reason that God has forsaken it. Such comforters are wont to declare immediately that that soul must have been very evil, since such things as these are befalling it.

5. And there will likewise be those who tell the soul to retrace its steps, since it is finding no pleasure or consolation in the things of God as it did aforetime. And in this way they double the poor soul's trials; for it may well be that the greatest affliction which it is feeling is that of the knowledge of its own miseries, thinking that it sees itself, more clearly than daylight, to be full of evils and sins, for God gives it that light of knowledge<sup>5</sup> in that night of contemplation, as we shall presently show. And, when the soul finds someone whose opinion agrees with its own, and who says that these things must be due to its own fault, its affliction and trouble increase infinitely and are wont to become more grievous than death. And, not content with this, such confessors, thinking that these things proceed from sin, make these souls go over their lives and cause them to make many general confessions, and crucify them afresh; not understanding that this may quite well not be the time for any of such things, and that their penitents should be left in the state of purgation which God gives them, and be comforted and encouraged to desire it until God be pleased to dispose otherwise; for until that time, no matter what the souls themselves may do and their confessors may say, there is no remedy for them.

6. This, with the Divine favour, we shall consider hereafter, and also how the soul should conduct itself at such a time, and how the confessor must treat it, and what signs there will be whereby it may be known if this is the purgation of the soul; and, in such case, whether

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'on the road.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Reasons,' found in many editions, is a copyist's or printer's error. E.p. has 'occasions.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'For it will happen that God will lead it.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'who will say to it what Job's comforters said to Job, that it, etc.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'for God gives it to understand this.'

it be of sense or of spirit (which is the dark night whereof we speak), and how it may be known if it be melancholy or some other imperfection with respect to sense or to spirit. For there may be some souls who will think, or whose confessors will think, that God is leading them along this road of the dark night of spiritual purgation, whereas they may possibly be suffering only from some of the imperfections aforementioned. And, again, there are many souls who think that they have no aptitude for prayer, when they have very much; and there are others who think<sup>1</sup> that they have much when they have hardly any.

7. There are other souls who labour and weary themselves to a piteous extent, and yet go backward, seeking profit in that which is not profitable, but is rather a hindrance; and there are still others who, by remaining at rest and in quietness, continue to make great progress. There are others who are hindered and disturbed and make no progress, because of the very consolations and favours that God is granting them in order that they may make progress. And there are many other things on this road that befall those who follow it, both joys and afflictions and hopes and griefs:<sup>2</sup> some proceeding from the spirit of perfection and others from imperfection. Of all these, with the Divine favour, we shall endeavour to say something, so that each soul<sup>3</sup> who reads this may be able to see something of the road that he ought to follow, if he aspire to attain to the summit of this Mount.

8. And, since this introduction relates to the dark night through which the soul must go to God, let not the reader marvel if it seem to him somewhat dark also. This, I believe, will be so at the beginning when he begins to read; but, as he passes on, he will find himself understanding the first part better, since one part will explain another. And then, if he read it a second time, I believe it will seem clearer to him and the instruction will appear sounder.<sup>4</sup> And if any persons find themselves disagreeing with this instruction,<sup>5</sup> it will be due to my ignorance and poor style; for in itself the matter is good and of the first importance. But I think that, even were it written in a more excellent and perfect manner than it is, only the minority would profit by it,<sup>6</sup> for we shall not here set down things that are very moral and delect-

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'and others, on the contrary, think.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'and disturbed on this road, wherein to those who follow it there befall many things—joys and afflictions and hopes and griefs.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'each one.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'will appear more certain.'

<sup>5</sup> So Alc. [and P. Silverio]. 'The other codices and editions have 'reading' [i.e., 'that which they read'].

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'than it is, it would not be appreciated by many.'

able<sup>1</sup> for all spiritual persons who desire to travel toward God by pleasant and delectable ways,<sup>2</sup> but solid and substantial instruction, as well suited to one kind of person as to another, if they desire to pass to the detachment of spirit which is here treated.

9. Nor is my principal intent to address all, but rather certain persons of our sacred Order of Mount Carmel of the primitive observance, both friars and nuns—since they have desired me to do so—to whom God is granting the favour of setting them on the road to this Mount; who, as they are already detached from the temporal things of this world, will better understand the instruction concerning detachment of spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Needless to say, the Saint does not here mean that he will not write in conformity with moral standards—no writer is more particular in this respect—nor that he will deal with no delectable matters at all, but rather that he will go to the very roots of spiritual teaching and expound the 'solid and substantial instruction,' which not only forms its basis but also leads the soul toward the most intimate union with God in love.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'for spiritual persons who desire to travel, by [ways] that are pleasant, to God.' There are various other readings in these lines—all of them, however, differing from the text extremely slightly.



## BOOK THE FIRST

*Wherein is described the nature of dark night and how necessary it is to pass through it to Divine union; and in particular this book describes the dark night of sense, and desire, and the evils which these work in the soul.*<sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER I

*Sets down the first stanza. Describes two different nights through which spiritual persons pass, according to the two parts of man, the lower and the higher. Expounds the stanza which follows.*

#### STANZA THE FIRST<sup>2</sup>

**On a dark night, Kindled in love with yearnings—oh, happy chance!—**

**I went forth without being observed, My house being now at rest.**

**I**N this first stanza<sup>3</sup> the soul sings of the happy fortune and chance which it experienced in going forth from all things that are without,<sup>4</sup> and from the desires<sup>5</sup> and imperfections<sup>6</sup> that are in the sensual<sup>7</sup> part of man because of the disordered state of his reason. For the understanding of this it must be known that, for a soul to attain to the state of perfection, it has ordinarily first<sup>8</sup> to pass through two principal kinds of night, which spiritual persons call purgations or purifications of the soul; and here we call them nights, for in both of them the soul journeys, as it were, by night, in darkness.

<sup>1</sup> The Codices give neither title nor sub-title: both were inserted in e.p. ['Desire' is to be taken as the direct object of 'describes'; 'these' refers to 'sense' and 'desire,' not to the dark night.]

<sup>2</sup> So A, D, e.p. Omitted from Alc., B, C.

<sup>3</sup> Alc.: 'In this happy stanza.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'that are without.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lia*, 'appetites,' but this word is uniformly translated 'desires,' as the Spanish context frequently will not admit the use of the stronger word in English.]

<sup>6</sup> A, B: 'and affections.'

<sup>7</sup> [The word translated 'sensual' is sometimes *sensual*, and sometimes, as here, *sensitivo*. The meaning in either case is simply 'of sense.']

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits 'first.'

2. The first night or<sup>1</sup> purgation is of the sensual part of the soul, which is treated in the present stanza, and will be treated in the first part of this book. And the second is of the spiritual part; of this speaks the second stanza, which follows; and of this we shall treat likewise, in the second and the third part,<sup>2</sup> with respect to the activity of the soul; and in the fourth part, with respect to its passivity.

3.<sup>3</sup> And this first night pertains to beginners, occurring at the time when God begins to bring them into the state of contemplation; in this night the spirit likewise has a part, as we shall say in due course. And the second night, or purification, pertains to those who are already proficient, occurring at the time when God desires to bring them to the state of union with God. And this latter night is a more obscure and dark and terrible purgation, as we shall say afterwards.

#### EXPOSITION OF THE STANZA

4. Briefly, then, the soul means by this stanza that it went forth (being led by God) for love of Him alone, enkindled in love of Him, upon a dark night, which is the privation and purgation of all its sensual desires, with respect to all outward things of the world and to those which were delectable to its flesh, and likewise with respect to the desires of its will. This all comes to pass in this purgation of sense; for which cause the soul says that it went forth while its house was still at rest<sup>4</sup>; which house is its sensual part, the desires being at rest and asleep in it, as it is to them.<sup>5</sup> For there is no going forth from the pains and afflictions of the secret places of the desires until these be mortified and put to sleep. And this, the soul says, was a happy chance for it—namely, its going forth without being observed: that is, without any desire of its flesh or any other thing being able to hinder it. And likewise, because it went out by night—which signifies the privation of all these things wrought in it by God, which privation was night for it.

<sup>1</sup> So Alc. The other authorities read 'and' for 'or.'

<sup>2</sup> So Alc. The other authorities read: 'and of this we shall treat likewise, in the second part with respect to the activity [of the soul] [*these last three words are not contained in the Spanish of any authority*], and in the third and the fourth part with respect to its passivity.' E.p. follows this division. Alc., however, seems to correspond more closely with the Saint's intentions; for he did not divide each of his 'books' into 'parts' and appears therefore to indicate by 'part' what we know as 'book.' Now Book I is in fact devoted to the active purgation of sense, as are Books II and III to the active purgation of the spirit. For the 'fourth book,' see Introduction, pp. xlv-xlvi above.

<sup>3</sup> This paragraph is omitted from e.p.

<sup>4</sup> [On the phrase 'at rest,' cf. p. 10, n. 4, above.]

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and it in them.' This 'it' means the soul; the preceding 'it,' the house.]

5. And it was a happy chance that God should lead it into this night, from which there came to it so much good;<sup>1</sup> for of itself the soul would not have succeeded in entering therein, because no man of himself can succeed in voiding himself of all his desires in order to come to God.<sup>2</sup>

6. This is, in brief, the exposition of the stanza; and we shall now have to go through it, line by line, setting down one line after another, and expounding that which pertains to our purpose.<sup>3</sup> And the same method is followed in the other stanzas, as I said in the Prologue<sup>4</sup>—namely, that each stanza will be set down and expounded, and afterwards each line.<sup>5</sup>

## CHAPTER II

*Explains the nature of this dark night through which the soul says that it has passed on the road to union.*<sup>6</sup>

### On a dark night

WE may say that there are three reasons<sup>7</sup> for which this journey<sup>8</sup> made by the soul to union with God is called night. The first has to do with the point from which the soul goes forth, for it has gradually to deprive itself of desire for all the worldly things which it possessed, by denying them to itself;<sup>9</sup> the which denial and deprivation are, as it were, night to all the senses<sup>10</sup> of man. The second reason has to do with the mean,<sup>11</sup> or the road along which the soul must travel to this union—that is, faith, which is likewise<sup>12</sup> as dark as night to the understanding. The third has to do with the point to which it travels—namely, God, Who, equally, is dark night to the

<sup>1</sup> A, e.p.: 'from which there comes so much good.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'to go to God.'

<sup>3</sup> The rest of the paragraph is omitted from e.p., possibly because it was already in the 'Argument' above (p. 9).

<sup>4</sup> I.e., in the 'Argument.'

<sup>5</sup> A: 'each line separately.'

<sup>6</sup> So A, Alc, C, D. B, e.p. read: 'to union with God.' A, B, C, D, e.p. add further: 'Sets down the causes thereof.'

<sup>7</sup> Alc, D: 'three things.'

<sup>8</sup> [More exactly, this 'passage' or 'transition' (*tránsito*).]

<sup>9</sup> [*Lit.*, 'in negation of them.']

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: 'to all the desires and senses.'

<sup>11</sup> E.p.: 'the manner.' [By 'the mean' is meant the middle, or main part, of the journey.]

<sup>12</sup> E.p. omits 'likewise.'

soul in this life.<sup>1</sup> These three nights must pass through the soul—or, rather, the soul must pass through them—in order that it may come to Divine union with God.<sup>2</sup>

2. In the book of the holy Tobias these three kinds of night were shadowed forth by the three nights which, as the angel commanded, were to pass ere the youth Tobias should be united with his bride. In the first he commanded him to burn the heart of the fish in the fire, which signifies the heart that is affectioned to, and set upon, the things of the world; which, in order that one may begin to journey toward God, must be burned and purified from all that is creature, in the fire of the love of God. And in this purgation the devil flees away, for he has power over the soul only when it is attached to things<sup>3</sup> corporeal and temporal.

3. On the second night the angel told him that he would be admitted into the company of the holy patriarchs, who are the fathers of the faith. For, passing through the first night, which is self-privation of all objects of sense, the soul at once enters into the second night, and abides alone in faith to the exclusion, not of charity, but of other knowledge acquired by the understanding, as we shall say hereafter,<sup>4</sup> which is a thing that pertains not to sense.

4. On the third night the angel told him that he would obtain a blessing, which is God; Who, by means of the second night, which is faith, continually communicates Himself to the soul in such a secret and intimate manner that He becomes another night to the soul, inasmuch as this said communication is far darker than those others, as we shall say presently. And, when this third night is past, which is the complete accomplishment of the communication of God in the spirit, which is ordinarily wrought in great darkness of the soul, there then follows its union with the Bride, which is the Wisdom of God. Even so the angel said likewise to Tobias that, when the third night was past, he should be united with his bride in the fear of the Lord; for, when this fear of God is perfect, love is perfect, and this comes to pass when the transformation of the soul is wrought through its love.<sup>5</sup>

5. These three parts of the night are all one night; but, after the

<sup>1</sup> E.p. glosses the text by substituting: 'Who, since He is incomprehensible and infinitely transcendent, may also be called dark night.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. shortens this sentence: 'Through these three nights the soul must pass in order to come to Divine union with God.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'to the pleasures of things.'

<sup>4</sup> The words 'to the exclusion . . . hereafter' are found only in Alc.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. reads: 'for, when this is perfect, the love of God is so likewise, and this comes to pass when the transformation of the soul is wrought through its love for God.'

manner of night, it has three parts.<sup>1</sup> For the first part, which is that of sense, is comparable to the beginning of night, the point at which things begin to fade from sight. And the second part, which is faith, is comparable to midnight, which is total darkness. And the third part is like the close of night, which is God, the which part is now near to the light of day. And, that we may understand this the better, we shall treat of each of these reasons separately as we proceed.<sup>2</sup>

### CHAPTER III

*Speaks of the first cause of this night, which is that of the privation of the desire in all things, and gives the reason for which it is called night.*<sup>3</sup>

WE here describe as night the privation of every kind of pleasure which belongs to the desire; for, even as night is, naught but the privation of light, and, consequently, of all objects that can be seen by means of light, whereby the visual faculty<sup>4</sup> remains unoccupied<sup>5</sup> and in darkness, even so likewise the mortification of desire may be called night to the soul. For, when the soul is deprived of the pleasure of its desire in all things, it remains, as it were, unoccupied and in darkness. For even as the visual faculty, by means of light, is nourished and fed by objects which can be seen, and which, when the light is quenched, are not seen,<sup>6</sup> even so, by means of the desire, the soul is nourished and fed by all things wherein it can take pleasure according to its faculties; and, when this also is quenched, or rather, mortified,<sup>7</sup> the soul ceases to feed upon the pleasure of all things, and thus, with respect to its desire, it remains unoccupied and in darkness.

2. Let us take an example from each of the faculties. When the soul deprives its desire of the pleasure of all that can delight the sense of hearing, the soul remains unoccupied and in darkness with respect to this faculty. And, when it deprives itself of the pleasure of all that can

<sup>1</sup> E.p. reads: 'And, that we may the better understand it, we shall treat of each one of these reasons separately as we proceed. And it will be noted that these three nights are all one night, which has three parts.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits this sentence, which it has prefixed to the beginning of the paragraph. Alc. alone reads 'reasons'; the other authorities have 'things.'

<sup>3</sup> Alc. alone has the words 'and . . . night.'

<sup>4</sup> A. adds: 'as to all things.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'without anything (sc. to do).']

<sup>6</sup> E.p. has: 'and, when the light is quenched, this ceases.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'and when this is mortified.'

please the sense of sight, it remains unoccupied and in darkness with respect to this faculty also.<sup>1</sup> And, when it deprives itself of the pleasure of all the sweetness of perfumes which can give it pleasure through the sense of smell, it remains equally unoccupied and in darkness according to this faculty. And, if it also denies itself the pleasure of all food that can satisfy the palate, the soul likewise remains unoccupied and in darkness. And finally, when the soul mortifies itself with respect to all the delights and pleasures that it can receive from the sense of touch, it remains, in the same way, unoccupied and in darkness with respect to this faculty. So that the soul that has denied and thrust away from itself the pleasures which come from all these things, and has mortified its desire with respect to them, may be said to be, as it were, in the darkness of night, which is naught else than an emptiness within itself of all things.

3. The reason for this is that, as the philosophers say, the soul, as soon as God infuses it into the body, is like a smooth, blank board<sup>2</sup> upon which nothing is painted; and, save for that which it experiences through the senses, nothing is communicated to it, in the course of nature, from any other source. And thus, for as long as it is in the body, it is like one who is in a dark prison and who knows nothing, save what he is able to see through the windows of the said prison; and, if he saw nothing through them, he would see nothing in any other way. And thus the soul, save for that which is communicated to it through the senses, which are the windows of its prison, could acquire nothing, in the course of nature, in any other way.

4. Wherefore, if the soul rejects and denies that which it can receive through the senses, we can quite well say that it remains, as it were, in darkness and empty; since, as appears from what has been said, no light can enter it, in the course of nature, by any other means of illumination than those aforementioned.<sup>3</sup> For, although it is true that the soul cannot help hearing and seeing and smelling and tasting and touching, this is of no greater import, nor, if the soul denies and rejects the object, is it hindered more than if it saw it not, heard it not, etc. Just so a man who desires to shut his eyes will remain in darkness, like<sup>4</sup> the blind man who has not the faculty of sight. And to this purpose David says these words: *Pauper sum ego, et in laboribus a juventute*

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits the next three sentences, continuing: 'And the same may be said of the other senses. So that the soul that has denied, etc.'

<sup>2</sup> ['Blank board': Sp., *tabla rasa*; Lat., *tabula rasa*.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'than those aforementioned'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. has 'as much as' for 'like.'

*mea*.<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: I am poor and in labours from my youth. He calls himself poor, although it is clear that he was rich, because his will was not set upon riches, and thus it was as though he were really poor. But if he had been really poor and had not been so in his will, he would not have been truly poor, for his soul, as far as its desire was concerned, would have been rich and replete. For that reason we call this detachment night to the soul, for we are not treating here of the lack of things, since this implies no detachment on the part of the soul if it has a desire for them; but we are treating of the detachment from them of the taste and desire, for it is this that leaves the soul free and void of them, although it may have them; for it is not the things of this world that either occupy the soul or cause it harm, since they enter it not, but rather the will and desire for them, for it is these that dwell within it.

5. This first kind of night, as we shall say hereafter, belongs to the soul according to its sensual part,<sup>2</sup> which is one of the two parts, whereof we spoke above, through which the soul must pass in order to attain to union.<sup>3</sup>

6. Let us now say how meet it is for the soul to go forth from its house into this dark night of sense, in order to travel to union with God.

## CHAPTER IV

*Wherein is declared how necessary it is for the soul truly to pass through this dark night of sense, which is mortification of desire, in order that it may journey to union with God.*<sup>4</sup>

THE reason for which it is necessary for the soul, in order to attain to Divine union with God, to pass through this dark night of mortification of the desires and denial of pleasures in all things, is because all the affections which it has for creatures are pure darkness in the eyes of God, and, when the soul is clothed in these affections, it has no capacity for being enlightened and possessed by the pure and simple light of God,<sup>5</sup> if it first cast them not from it; for

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxxvii, 16 [A.V. lxxxviii, 15]. E.p. omits the Latin text and the words 'Which signifies.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits the rest of this paragraph, and also: 'as we shall say hereafter.' It had been said already.

<sup>3</sup> Only Alc. gives: 'in order to attain to union.'

<sup>4</sup> A adds: 'This is proved by comparisons of passages and figures from Sacred Scripture, etc.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'for being possessed in the pure and simple light of God.'

light cannot agree with darkness; since, as Saint John says: *Tenebræ eam non comprehenderunt*.<sup>1</sup> That is: The darkness could not receive the light.

2. The reason is that two contraries (even as philosophy teaches us) cannot coexist in one person; and that darkness, which is affection set upon the creatures, and light, which is God, are contrary to each other, and have no likeness or accord between one another, even as Saint Paul taught the Corinthians, saying: *Quæ conventio luci ad tenebras*?<sup>2</sup> That is to say: What communion can there be between light and darkness? Hence it is that the light of Divine union cannot dwell in the soul if these affections first flee not away from it.

3. In order that we may the better prove what has been said, it must be known that the affection and attachment which the soul has for creatures renders the soul like to these creatures; and, the greater is its affection, the closer is the equality and likeness between them; for love creates a likeness between that which loves and that which is loved. For which reason David, speaking of those who set their affections upon idols, said thus: *Similes illis fiant qui faciunt ea: et omnes qui confidunt in eis*.<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: Let them that set their heart upon them be like to them. And thus, he that loves a creature becomes as low as that creature, and, in some ways, lower; for love not only makes the lover equal to the object of his love, but even subjects him to it. Hence in the same way it comes to pass that the soul that loves anything else<sup>4</sup> becomes incapable of pure union with God and transformation in Him. For the low estate of the creature is much less capable of union with the high estate of the Creator than is darkness with light. For all things of earth and heaven, compared with God, are nothing, as Jeremias says in these words: *Aspexi terram, et ecce vacua erat, et nihil; et cælos, et non erat lux in eis*.<sup>5</sup> 'I beheld the earth,' he says, 'and it was void, and it was nothing; and the heavens, and saw that they had no light.' In saying that he beheld the earth void, he means that all its creatures were nothing, and that the earth was nothing likewise. And, in saying that he beheld the heavens and saw no light in them, he says that all the luminaries of heaven, compared with God, are pure darkness. So that in this way all the creatures are nothing; and their affections, we may say, are less than nothing, since they are an impediment to transformation in God and the privation thereof, even as darkness is

<sup>1</sup> St. John i, 5. Neither this nor any of the other Latin texts in this chapter is found in e.p.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians vi, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm cxiv, 8 [A.V. cxv, 8].

<sup>4</sup> The editions add, for a better understanding of the phrase, 'apart from God.'

<sup>5</sup> Jeremias iv, 23.

not only nothing, but less than nothing, since it is privation of light. And even as he that is in darkness comprehends not the light, so the soul that sets its affection upon<sup>1</sup> creatures will be unable to comprehend God; and, until it be purged, it will neither be able to possess Him here below, through pure transformation of love, nor yonder in clear vision. And, for greater clarity, we will now speak in greater detail.

4. All the being of creation, then, compared with the infinite Being of God, is nothing. And therefore the soul that sets its affection upon the being of creation is likewise nothing in the eyes of God, and less than nothing; for, as we have said, love makes equality and similitude, and even sets the lover below the object of his love. And therefore such a soul will in no wise be able to attain to union with the infinite Being of God; for that which is not can have no communion with that which is. And, coming down in detail to some examples,<sup>2</sup> all the beauty of the creatures, compared with the infinite beauty of God, is the height of deformity,<sup>3</sup> even as Solomon says in the Proverbs: *Fallax gratia, et vana est pulchritudo*.<sup>4</sup> 'Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain.' And thus the soul that is affectioned to the beauty of any creature is the height of deformity<sup>5</sup> in the eyes of God. And therefore this soul that is deformed will be unable to become transformed in beauty, which is God, since deformity cannot attain to beauty; and all the grace and beauty of the creatures, compared with the grace of God, is the height of misery<sup>6</sup> and of uncomeliness. Wherefore the soul that is ravished by the graces and beauties of the creatures has only supreme<sup>7</sup> misery and unattractiveness in the eyes of God; and thus it cannot be capable of the infinite grace and loveliness of God; for that which has no grace is far removed from that which is infinitely gracious; and all the goodness of the creatures of the world, in comparison with the infinite goodness of God, may be described as wickedness. 'For there is naught good, save only God.'<sup>8</sup> And therefore the soul that sets its heart upon the good things of the world is supremely<sup>9</sup> evil in the eyes of God. And, even

<sup>1</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'that has affection for.'

<sup>2</sup> The words 'And . . . examples' are found in Alc. only.

<sup>3</sup> [The words often translated 'deformity,' 'deformed,' or 'vileness,' 'vile,' are the ordinary contraries of 'beauty,' 'beautiful,' and might be rendered, more literally but less elegantly, 'ugliness,' 'ugly.']

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs xxxi, 30.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. softens this phrase to: 'has its share of deformity.'

<sup>6</sup> [For 'grace . . . misery' the Spanish has *gracia . . . desgracia*. The latter word, however, does not, as might be supposed, correspond to English 'disgrace.']

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits 'supreme'; the Spanish word [having a more literally superlative force than the English] can hardly be applied, save in a restricted sense, to what is finite.

<sup>8</sup> St. Luke xviii, 19.

<sup>9</sup> This word, too, is omitted from e.p.

as wickedness comprehends not goodness, even so such a soul cannot be united with God,<sup>1</sup> Who is supreme goodness.

5. All the wisdom of the world and all human ability, compared with the infinite wisdom of God, are pure and supreme ignorance,<sup>2</sup> even as Saint Paul writes *ad Corinthios*, saying: *Sapientia hujus mundi stultitia est apud Deum.*<sup>3</sup> 'The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.'<sup>4</sup> Wherefore any soul that makes account of all its knowledge and ability in order to come to union with the wisdom of God is supremely ignorant in the eyes of God and will remain far removed from that wisdom; for ignorance knows not what wisdom is, even as Saint Paul says that this wisdom seems foolishness to God; since, in the eyes of God,<sup>5</sup> those who consider themselves to be persons with a certain amount of knowledge are very ignorant, so that the Apostle, writing to the Romans, says of them: *Dicentes enim se esse sapientes, stulti facti sunt.* That is: Professing themselves to be wise, they became foolish.<sup>6</sup> And those alone acquire wisdom of God who are like ignorant children, and, laying aside their knowledge, walk in His service with love. This manner of wisdom Saint Paul taught likewise *ad Corinthios*: *Si quis videtur inter vos sapiens esse in hoc sæculo, stultus fiat ut sit sapiens. Sapientia enim hujus mundi stultitia est apud Deum.*<sup>7</sup> That is: If any man among you seem to be wise, let him become ignorant that he may be wise; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. So that, in order to come to union with the wisdom of God, the soul has to proceed rather by unknowing than by knowing; and all the dominion and liberty of the world, compared with the liberty and dominion of the Spirit of God, is the most abject<sup>8</sup> slavery, affliction and captivity.

6. Wherefore the soul that is enamoured of prelacy,<sup>9</sup> or of any other such office, and longs for liberty of desire, is considered and treated, in the sight of God, not as a son, but as a base slave and captive,<sup>10</sup> since it has not been willing to accept His holy doctrine, wherein He teaches us that whoso would be greater must be less, and whoso would be less must be greater.<sup>11</sup> And therefore such a soul will be unable to attain to

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'in perfect union.'

<sup>2</sup> B abbreviates greatly here and then omits the remainder of the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians iii, 19.

<sup>4</sup> [In P. Silverio's edition § 4 ends here, but the sense of the passage seems to demand a break where it has been made above.]

<sup>5</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'knows not what wisdom is, and, in the eyes of God. . . .'

<sup>6</sup> Romans i, 22.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians iii, 18-19.

<sup>8</sup> [*Lit.*, 'is supreme.']

<sup>9</sup> [The word is applicable to any kind of preferential position.]

<sup>10</sup> E.p. reads: 'not as a dear son, but as a base person, a captive of its passions,' etc.

<sup>11</sup> E.p.: '... doctrine, which teaches us that whoso would be greater must be less.

that true liberty of spirit which is attained in His Divine union. For slavery can have no part with liberty; and liberty cannot dwell in a heart that is subject to desires, for this is the heart of a slave; but it dwells in the free man, because he has the heart of a son. It was for this cause that Sara bade her husband Abraham cast out the bondwoman and her son, saying that the son of the bondwoman should not be heir with the son of the free woman.<sup>1</sup>

7. And all the delights and pleasures of the will in all the things of the world, in comparison with all those delights which are God, are supreme affliction, torment and bitterness. And thus he that sets his heart upon them is considered, in the sight of God, as worthy of supreme affliction, torment and bitterness; and thus he will be unable to attain to the delights of the embrace of union with God, since he is worthy of affliction and bitterness.<sup>2</sup> All the wealth and glory of all creation, in comparison with the wealth which is God, is supreme poverty and wretchedness. Thus the soul that loves and possesses creature wealth is supremely poor and wretched in the sight of God, and for that reason will be unable to attain to that wealth and glory which is the state of transformation in God;<sup>3</sup> for that which is miserable and poor is supremely far removed from that which is supremely rich and glorious.

8. And therefore Divine Wisdom, grieving for such as these, who make themselves vile, low, miserable and poor, because they love the things in this world which seem to them so rich and beautiful, addresses an exclamation to them in the Proverbs, saying: *O viri, ad vos clamito, et vox mea ad filios hominum. Intelligite, parvuli, astutiam, et insipientes, animadvertite. Audite quia de rebus magnis locutura sum.* And farther on he continues: *Mecum sunt divitæ, et gloria, opes superbæ et justitia. Melior est fructus meus auro, et lapide pretioso, et gemina mea argento electo. In viis justitiæ ambulo, in medio semitarum judicii, ut ditem diligentes me, et thesauros eorum repleam.*<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: O ye men, to you I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. Attend,<sup>5</sup> little ones, to subtlety and sagacity; ye that are foolish, take notice. Hear, for I have to speak of great things. With me are riches and glory, high riches and justice. Better is the fruit that ye will find in me than gold and precious stones; and my generation—namely, that which ye will engender of me in your souls—is better than choice silver. I walk in the ways of

<sup>1</sup> Genesis xxi, 10.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'since . . . bitterness.'

<sup>3</sup> The remainder of the paragraph is found only in A and e.p.

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs viii, 4-6, 18-21.

<sup>5</sup> So A, Alc. E.p.: 'Understand.' The other authorities omit this passage.

justice, in the midst of the paths of judgment, that I may enrich those that love me and fill<sup>1</sup> their treasures perfectly.—Herein Divine Wisdom speaks to all those that set their hearts and affections upon anything of the world, according as we have already said. And she calls them ‘little ones,’ because they make themselves like to that which they love, which is little. And therefore she tells them to be subtle and to take note that she is treating of great things and not of things that are little like themselves. That the great riches and the glory that they love are with her and in her, and not where they think. And that high riches and justice dwell in her; for, although they think the things of this world to be all this, she tells them to take note that her things are better, saying that the fruit that they will find in them will be better for them than gold and precious stones; and that that which she engenders in souls is better than the choice silver which they love; by which is understood any kind of affection that can be possessed in this life.

## CHAPTER V

*Wherein the aforementioned subject is treated and continued, and it is shown by passages and figures from Holy Scripture how necessary it is for the soul to journey to God through this dark night of the mortification of desire in all things.*

FROM what has been said it may be seen in some measure how great a distance there is between all that the creatures are in themselves and that which God is in Himself, and how souls<sup>2</sup> that set their affections upon any of these creatures are at as great a distance as they from God; for, as we have said, love produces equality and likeness. This distance was clearly realized by Saint Augustine, who said in the *Soliloquies*, speaking with God:<sup>3</sup> ‘Miserable man that I am, when will my littleness and imperfection be able to have fellowship with Thy uprightness? Thou indeed art good, and I am evil; Thou art merciful, and I am impious; Thou art holy, I am miserable; Thou

<sup>1</sup> A, Alc. both have ‘fulfil’ [*cumplir*] but in the archaic Spanish sense of ‘swell,’ which is the reading of c.p. and later editions. [For the rendering of the text cf. A.V. and D.V.: ‘I . . . fill their treasures.’]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: ‘We have already spoken of the distance that there is between the creatures and God, and how souls,’ etc.

<sup>3</sup> A, B omit: ‘speaking with God.’

art just, I am unjust; Thou art light, I am blind; Thou, life, I, death; Thou, medicine, I, sick; Thou, supreme truth, I, utter vanity.<sup>1</sup> All this is said by this Saint.<sup>2</sup>

2. Wherefore, it is supreme ignorance for the soul to think that it will be able to pass to this high estate of union with God if first it void not the desire of all things, natural and supernatural, which may hinder it, according as we shall explain hereafter;<sup>3</sup> for there is the greatest possible distance between these things and that which comes to pass in this estate, which is naught else than transformation in God. For this reason Our Lord, when showing us this path, said through Saint Luke: *Qui non renuntiat omnibus quæ possidet, non potest meus esse discipulus.*<sup>4</sup> This signifies: He that renounces not all things that he possesses with his will cannot be My disciple. And this is evident; for the doctrine that the Son of God came to teach<sup>5</sup> was contempt for all things, whereby a man might receive as a reward the Spirit of God in himself. For, as long as the soul rejects not all things, it has no capacity to receive the Spirit of God in pure transformation.

3. Of this we have a figure in Exodus, wherein we read that God<sup>6</sup> gave not the children of Israel the food from Heaven, which was manna, until the flour which they had brought from Egypt failed them. By this is signified that first of all it is meet to renounce all things, for this angels' food is not fitting for the palate that would find delight in the food of men. And not only does the soul become incapable of receiving the Divine Spirit when it stays and pastures on other strange pleasures, but those souls greatly offend the Divine Majesty who desire spiritual food and are not content with God alone, but desire rather to intermingle desire and affection for other things. This can likewise be seen in the same book of Holy Scripture,<sup>7</sup> wherein it is said that, not content with that simplest of food, they desired and craved fleshly

<sup>1</sup> A, B, C: 'universal vanity.' D: 'supreme vanity.'

<sup>2</sup> *Soliloq.*, chap. ii (Migne: *Patr. lat.*, Vol. XL, p. 866). E.p. has: 'The which this Saint says concerning the inclination of man toward the creatures.'

<sup>3</sup> So Alc. The other authorities have merely: 'which may pertain to it,' and e.p. adds to this: 'through self-love.' Even when softened by Diego de Jesús this phrase of the Saint did not escape denunciation, and it was the first of the 'propositions' condemned in his writings (cf. p. li, above). It was defended by P. Basilio Ponce de León in his *Reply* (p. lii), and more extensively by P. Nicolás de Jesús María (*Elucidatio*, Pt. II, Chap. i, pp. 125-40). In reality, little defence is needed other than that contained in the last chapters of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, which clearly show the harm caused by supernatural favours, when these are abused, to the memory, the understanding and the will. Who, after all, can doubt that we may abuse 'things supernatural' and by such abuse hinder the soul from attaining union with God?

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke xiv, 33.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'that God's Majesty.'

<sup>6</sup> A, e.p.: 'to teach the world.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. alters this to: 'in the same Scripture.' [It does not, in fact, occur in the same book.]

food.<sup>1</sup> And that Our Lord was greatly wroth that they should desire to intermingle a food that was so base and so coarse with one that was so noble<sup>2</sup> and so simple; which, though it was so, had within itself the sweetness and substance<sup>3</sup> of all foods.<sup>4</sup> Wherefore, while they yet had the morsels in their mouths, as David says likewise: *Ira Dei descendit super eos.*<sup>5</sup> The wrath of God came down upon them, sending fire from Heaven and consuming many thousands of them; for God held it an unworthy thing that they should have a desire for other food when He had given them food from Heaven.

4. Oh, did spiritual persons but know how much good and what great abundance of spirit they lose through not seeking to raise up their desires above childish things, and how in this simple spiritual food they would find the sweetness of all things, if they desired not to taste those things! But such food gives them no pleasure, for the reason why the children of Israel received not the sweetness of all foods that was contained in the manna was that they would not reserve their desire for it alone. So that they failed to find in the manna all the sweetness and strength that they could wish, not because it was not contained in the manna, but because they desired some other thing. Thus he that will love some other thing together<sup>6</sup> with God of a certainty makes little account of God, for he weighs in the balance against God that which, as we have said, is at the greatest possible distance from God.

5. It is well known by experience that, when the will of a man is affectioned to one thing, he prizes it more than any other; although some other thing may be much better, he takes less pleasure in it. And if he wishes to enjoy both, he is bound to wrong the more important, because he makes an equality between them.<sup>7</sup> Wherefore, since there is naught that equals God, the soul that loves some other thing together with Him, or clings to it, does Him a grievous wrong. And if this is so, what would it be doing if it loved anything more than God?

6. It is this, too, that was denoted by the command of God to Moses<sup>8</sup> that he should ascend the Mount to speak with Him: He commanded him not only to ascend it alone, leaving the children of Israel

<sup>1</sup> Numbers xi, 4.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and substance.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxxvii, 31 [A.V. lxxviii, 31].

<sup>4</sup> E.p. substitutes for the last clause: 'because of the unjust equality that he makes between them.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B: 'This likewise is that which God intended to teach when He commanded Moses,' etc.

<sup>6</sup> [Lit., 'so high.']

<sup>7</sup> [Wisdom xvi, 20.]

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'together.'

below, but not even to allow the beasts to feed over against the Mount.<sup>1</sup> By this He signified that the soul that is to ascend this mount of perfection, to commune with God, must not only renounce all things and leave them below,<sup>2</sup> but must not even allow the desires, which are the beasts, to pasture over against this mount—that is, upon other things which are not purely God, in Whom—that is, in the state of perfection—every desire ceases. So he that journeys on the road and makes the ascent to God must needs be habitually careful to quell and mortify the desires; and the greater the speed wherewith a soul does this, the sooner will it reach the end of its journey. Until these be quelled, it cannot reach the end, however much it practise the virtues, since it is unable to attain to perfection in them; for this perfection consists in voiding and stripping and purifying the soul of every desire. Of this we have another very<sup>3</sup> striking figure in Genesis, where we read that, when the patriarch Jacob desired to ascend Mount Bethel, in order to build an altar there to God whereon he should offer Him<sup>4</sup> sacrifice, he first commanded all his people to do three things: one was that they should cast away from them all strange gods; the second, that they should purify themselves; the third, that they should change their garments.<sup>5</sup>

7. By these three things it is signified that any soul that will ascend this mount in order to make of itself an altar whereon it may offer to God the sacrifice of pure love and praise and pure reverence, must, before ascending to the summit of the mount, have done these three things aforementioned perfectly. First, it must cast away all strange gods—namely, all strange affections and attachments; secondly, it must purify itself of the remnants which the desires aforementioned have left in the soul, by means of the dark night of sense whereof we are speaking, habitually<sup>6</sup> denying them and repenting itself of them; and thirdly, in order to reach the summit of this high mount, it must have changed its garments, which, through its observance of the first two things, God will change for it, from old to new, by giving it a new understanding of God in God, the old<sup>7</sup> human understanding being cast aside; and a new love of God in God, the will being now stripped of all its old desires and human pleasures, and the soul being brought

<sup>1</sup> [Exodus xxxiv, 2-3.] E.p.: 'within sight of the Mount.' A, B: 'near the Mount.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and leave them below.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits 'very.'

<sup>4</sup> The Codices have: 'whereon he offered Him.' The editions change this to: 'whereon to offer Him.'

<sup>5</sup> Genesis xxxv, 2.

<sup>7</sup> A reads: 'the new.'

<sup>6</sup> A, B have 'duly' for 'habitually.'

into a new state of knowledge and profound delight,<sup>1</sup> all other old images and forms of knowledge having been cast away, and all that belongs to the old man, which is the aptitude of the natural self, quelled, and the soul clothed with a new supernatural aptitude with respect to all its faculties. So that its operation, which before was human, has become Divine, which is that that is attained in the state of union, wherein the soul becomes naught else than an altar whereon God is adored in praise and love, and God alone is upon it. For this cause God commanded that the altar whereon the Ark of the Covenant was to be laid<sup>2</sup> should be hollow within;<sup>3</sup> so that the soul may understand how completely empty of all things God desires it to be, that it may be an altar worthy of the presence of His Majesty. On this altar it was likewise forbidden that there should be any strange fire, or that its own fire should ever fail; and so essential was this that, because Nadab and Abiu, who were the sons of the High Priest Aaron, offered strange fire upon His altar, Our Lord was wroth and slew them there before the altar.<sup>4</sup> By this we are to understand that the love of God must never fail in the soul, so that the soul may be a worthy altar, and also that no other love must be mingled with it.

8. God permits not that any other thing should dwell together with Him. Wherefore we read in the First Book of the Kings that, when the Philistines put the Ark of the Covenant into the temple where their idol was, the idol was cast down upon the ground at the dawn of each day,<sup>5</sup> and broken to pieces<sup>6</sup>. And He permits and wills that there should be only one desire where He is, which is to keep the law of God perfectly, and to bear upon oneself the Cross of Christ. And thus naught else is said in the Divine Scripture to have been commanded by God to be put in the Ark, where the manna was, save the book of the Law,<sup>7</sup> and the rod of Moses,<sup>8</sup> which signifies the Cross. For the soul that aspires to naught else than the keeping of the law of the Lord perfectly and the bearing of the Cross of Christ will be a true Ark, containing within itself the true manna, which is God,<sup>9</sup> when that soul

<sup>1</sup> [More literally: 'and abysmal delight.'] Alc. omits these words by a copyist's oversight. A, B, C give them; D has: 'and habitual delight.' The Saint certainly wrote *ahisal*, a word which had passed out of use when the *editio princeps* was published, in 1618.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'whereon sacrifices were to be offered.' The reading is nearer to Scripture than that of the Codices.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus xxvii, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Leviticus x, 1-2. E.p. reads: 'before the same altar.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B: 'of each morning.'

<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] v, 3-5.

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy xxxi, 26.

<sup>8</sup> Numbers xvii, 10. [More properly, 'the rod of Aaron.']

<sup>9</sup> E.p. ends the chapter here.

attains to a perfect possession within itself of this law and this rod, without any other thing soever.

## CHAPTER VI

*Wherein are treated two serious evils caused in the soul by the desires, the one evil being privative and the other positive.*<sup>1</sup>

**I**N order that what we have said may be the more clearly and fully understood, it will be well to set down here and state how<sup>2</sup> these desires are the cause of two serious evils in the soul: the one is that they deprive it of the Spirit of God, and the other is that the soul wherein they dwell is wearied, tormented, darkened, defiled and weakened, according to that which is said in Jeremias, Chapter II: *Duo mala fecit Populus meus: dereliquerunt fontem aquæ vivæ, et foderunt sibi cisternas, dissipatas, quæ continere non valent aquas.* Which signifies: They have forsaken Me, Who am the fountain of living water, and they have hewed them out broken cisterns, that can hold no water.<sup>3</sup> Those two evils—namely, the privative and the positive—may be caused by any disordered act of the desire. And, speaking first of all of the privative, it is clear<sup>4</sup> from the very fact that the soul becomes affectioned to a thing which comes under the head of creature, that the more the desire for that thing fills the soul,<sup>5</sup> the less capacity has the soul for God; inasmuch as two contraries, according to the philosophers, cannot coexist in one person;<sup>6</sup> and further, since, as we said in the fourth chapter, affection for God and affection for creatures are contraries, there cannot be contained within one will affection for creatures and affection for God.<sup>7</sup> For what has the creature to do with the Creator? What has sensual to do with spiritual? Visible with invisible? Temporal with eternal? Food that is heavenly, spiritual and pure with food that is of sense alone and is purely sensual? Christlike poverty of spirit with attachment to aught soever?

2. Wherefore, as in natural generation no form can be introduced

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'This is proved by passages from Scripture.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'it will be well to state here how.'

<sup>3</sup> Jeremias ii, 13.

<sup>4</sup> So Alc.—A, B, e.p. read: 'These two evils are caused by one act of the desire. For it is clear,' etc.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the greater the bulk that that desire has in the soul.']

<sup>6</sup> E.p. modifies: '... it has for God; for, as we said in Chapter iv, two contraries cannot coexist in one person; and affection for God and affection for creatures are contraries and so cannot coexist in one person.' A, B omit 'according to the philosophers' and 'as we said in the fourth chapter.'

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 25, above.

unless the preceding, contrary form is first expelled from the subject, which form, while present, is an impediment to the other by reason of the contrariety which the two have between each other; even so, for as long as the soul is subjected to the sensual spirit,<sup>1</sup> the spirit which is pure and spiritual cannot enter it. Wherefore our Saviour said through Saint Matthew: *Non est bonum sumere panem filiorum, et mittere canibus.*<sup>2</sup> That is: It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs. And elsewhere, too, he says through the same Evangelist<sup>3</sup>: *Nolite sanctum dare canibus.*<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: Give not that which is holy to the dogs. In these passages Our Lord compares those who renounce their creature-desires, and prepare themselves to receive the Spirit of God in purity, to the children of God; and those who would have their desire feed upon the creatures, to dogs. For it is given to children to eat with their father at table and from his dish, which is to feed upon His Spirit, and to dogs are given the crumbs which fall from the table.

3. From this we are to learn that all created things are crumbs that have fallen from the table of God. Wherefore he that feeds ever upon<sup>5</sup> the creatures is rightly called a dog, and therefore the bread is taken from the children, because they desire not to rise above feeding upon the crumbs, which are created things, to the table of the Uncreated Spirit of their Father. Therefore, like dogs, they are ever hungering, and justly so, because the crumbs serve to whet their appetite rather than to satisfy their hunger. And thus David says of them: *Famem patientur ut canes, et circuibunt civitatem. Si vero non fuerint saturati, et murmurabunt.*<sup>6</sup> Which signifies: They shall suffer hunger like dogs and shall go round about the city, and, if they find not enough to fill them, they shall murmur. For this is the nature of one that has desires, that he is ever discontented and dissatisfied, like one that suffers hunger; for what has the hunger which all the creatures suffer to do with the fullness which is caused by the Spirit of God? Wherefore this fullness that is uncreated<sup>7</sup> cannot enter the soul, if there be not first cast out that other created hunger which belongs to the desire of the soul; for, as we have said,<sup>8</sup> two contraries cannot dwell in one person, the which contraries in this case<sup>9</sup> are hunger and fullness.

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'sensual and animal spirit.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew xv, 26.

<sup>3</sup> So Alc. A, B: *Et ubique*. E.p.: 'And elsewhere.'

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew vii, 6.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'he that goes feeding upon.']

<sup>6</sup> Psalm lvi, 15-16 [A.V., lix, 14-15].

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'this fullness of God.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: '... cast out from it this hunger of the desire; for, as has been said,' etc.

<sup>9</sup> E.p. omits: 'in this case.'

4. From what has been said it will be seen how much greater is the work of God<sup>1</sup> in the clearing and the purging of a soul from these contrarieties than in the creating of that soul from nothing. For these contrarieties, these contrary desires and affections, are more completely opposed to God and offer Him greater resistance than does nothingness;<sup>2</sup> for nothingness resists not at all.<sup>3</sup> And let this suffice with respect to the first of the important evils which are inflicted upon the soul by the desires—namely, resistance to the Spirit of God—since much has been said of this above.

5. Let us now speak of the second effect which they cause in the soul. This is of many kinds, because the desires weary the soul and torment and darken it, and defile it and weaken it. Of these five things we shall speak separately, in their turn.

6. With regard to the first, it is clear that the desires weary and fatigue the soul; for they are like restless and discontented children, who are ever demanding this or that from their mother, and are never contented. And even as one that digs because he covets a treasure is wearied and fatigued, even so is the soul wearied and fatigued in order to attain that which its desires demand of it; and although in the end it may attain it, it is still weary, because it is never satisfied; for, after all, the cisterns which it is digging are broken, and cannot hold water to satisfy thirst. And thus, as Isaias says: *Lassus adhuc sitit, et anima ejus vacua est.*<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: His desire is empty. And the soul that has desires is wearied and fatigued; for it is like a man that is sick of a fever, who finds himself no better until the fever leaves him, and whose thirst increases with every moment. For, as is said in the Book of Job: *Cum satiatus fuerit, arctabitur, astuabit, et omnis dolor irruet super eum.*<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: When he has satisfied his desire, he will be the more oppressed and straitened; the heat of desire hath increased in his soul and thus every sorrow will fall upon him. The soul is wearied and fatigued by its desires, because it is wounded and moved and disturbed by them as is water by the winds; in just the same way they disturb it, allowing it not to rest in any place or in any thing soever. And of such a soul says Isaias: *Cor impii quasi mare fervens.*<sup>6</sup> 'The heart of the wicked man is like the sea when it rages.' And he is a wicked

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'how much more God does.'] E.p. adds: 'in a certain way.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... affections seem to hinder (*estorbar*) God more than does nothingness.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'for nothingness resists not His Majesty at all, and creature desire does resist Him.'

<sup>4</sup> Isaias xxix, 8. The editions supply the translation of the first part of the Latin text, which the Saint and the Codices omitted: 'After being wearied and fatigued, he yet thirsteth,' etc.

<sup>5</sup> Job xx, 22.

<sup>6</sup> Isaias lvii, 20.

man that conquers not his desires. The soul that would fain satisfy its desires grows wearied and fatigued; for it is like one that, being an hungered, opens his mouth that he may sate himself with wind, where-upon, instead of being satisfied, his craving becomes greater, for the wind is no food for him. To this purpose said Jeremias:<sup>1</sup> *In desiderio animæ suæ attraxit ventum amoris sui.*<sup>2</sup> As though he were to say: In the desire of his will he snuffed up the wind of his affection. And he then tries to describe the aridity wherein such a soul remains, and warns it, saying: *Prohibe pedem tuum a nuditate, et guttur tuum a siti.*<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: Keep thy foot (that is, thy thought) from being bare and thy throat from thirst (that is to say, thy will from the indulgence of the desire which causes greater dryness);<sup>4</sup> and, even as the lover is wearied and fatigued upon the day of his hopes, when his attempt has proved to be vain, so the soul is wearied and fatigued by all its desires and by indulgence in them, since they all cause it greater emptiness and hunger; for, as is often said, desire is like the fire, which increases as wood is thrown upon it, and which, when it has consumed the wood, must needs die.

7. And in this regard it is still worse with desire; for the fire goes down when the wood is consumed, but desire, though it increases when fuel is added to it, decreases not correspondingly when the fuel is consumed; on the contrary, instead of going down, as does the fire when its fuel is consumed, it grows weak through weariness, for its hunger is increased and its food diminished. And of this Isaias speaks, saying: *Declinabit ad dexteram, et esuriet: et comedet ad sinistram, et non saturabitur.*<sup>5</sup> This signifies: He shall turn to the right hand, and shall be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and shall not be filled. For they that mortify not their desires, when they 'turn,' justly see the fullness of the sweetness of spirit of those who are at the right hand of God, which fullness is not granted to themselves; and justly, too, when they eat on the left hand,<sup>6</sup> by which is meant the satisfaction of their desire with some creature comfort, they are not filled, for, leaving aside that which alone can satisfy, they feed on that which causes them greater hunger. It is clear, then, that the desires weary and fatigue the soul.

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'And thus Jeremias says of such a soul.'

<sup>2</sup> Jeremias ii, 24.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremias ii, 25.

<sup>4</sup> E.p. here omits several lines, continuing: 'Desire is like the fire,' etc.

<sup>5</sup> Isaias ix, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Thus Alc. [with 'run' for 'eat']. A, B, e.p. read: '... when they turn from the way of God (which is the right hand) are justly hungered, for they merit not the fullness of the sweetness of spirit. And justly, too, when they eat on the left hand,' etc. [While agreeing with P. Silverio that Alc. gives the better reading, I prefer 'eat' to 'run': it is nearer the

## CHAPTER VII

*Wherein is shown how the desires torment the soul. This is proved likewise by comparisons and quotations.*<sup>1</sup>

THE second kind of positive evil which the desires cause the soul is in their tormenting and afflicting of it, after the manner of one who is in torment through being bound with cords from which he has no relief until he be freed. And of these David says: *Funes peccatorum circumplexi sunt me.*<sup>2</sup> The cords of my sins, which are my desires, have constrained me round about. And, even as one that lies naked upon thorns and briars is tormented and afflicted, even so is the soul tormented and afflicted when it rests upon its desires. For they take hold upon it and wound it and distress it and cause it pain, even as do thorns. Of these David says likewise: *Circumdederunt me sicut apes: et exarserunt sicut ignis in spinis.*<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: They compassed me about like bees,<sup>4</sup> wounding me with their stings, and they were enkindled against me, like fire among thorns; for in the desires, which are the thorns, increases the fire of anguish and torment. And even as the husbandman, coveting the harvest for which he hopes, afflicts and torments the ox in the plough, even so does concupiscence afflict a soul that is subject to its desire to attain that for which it longs. This can be clearly seen in that desire which Dalila had to know whence Samson derived his strength that was so great, for the Scripture says that it fatigued and tormented her so much that it caused her to swoon, almost to the point of death, and she said: *Defecit anima ejus, et ad mortem usque lassata est.*<sup>5</sup>

2. The more intense is the desire, the greater is the torment which it causes the soul. So that the torment increases with the desire; and the greater are the desires which possess the soul, the greater are its torments; for in such a soul is fulfilled, even in this life, that which is said in the Apocalypse concerning Babylon,<sup>6</sup> in these words: *Quantum glorificavit se, et in deliciis fuit, tantum date illi tormentum, et luctum.*<sup>7</sup>

Scriptural passage and the two Spanish words, *comen* and *corren*, could easily be confused in MS.]

<sup>1</sup> Thus Alc. and e.p. A, B read: 'This is proved by comparisons and quotations from the Sacred Scripture.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxviii, 12 [A.V., cxviii, 12].

<sup>3</sup> Psalm cxviii, 61 [A.V., cxix, 61].

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'like stinging bees.'

<sup>5</sup> Judges xvi, 16. [Actually it was Samson, not Dalila, who was 'wearied even until death.']

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'concerning Babylon.'

<sup>7</sup> Apocalypse xviii, 7.

That is: As much as she has wished to exalt and fulfil her desires, so much give ye to her torment and anguish. And even as one that falls into the hands of his enemies is tormented and afflicted, even so is the soul tormented and afflicted that is led away by its desires. Of this there is a figure in the Book of the Judges, wherein it may be read that that strong man, Samson, who at one time was strong<sup>1</sup> and free and a judge of Israel, fell into the power of his enemies, and they took his strength from him, and put out his eyes, and bound him in a mill, to grind corn,<sup>2</sup> wherein they tormented and afflicted him greatly;<sup>3</sup> and thus it happens to the soul in which these its enemies, the desires, live and rule; for the first thing that they do is to weaken the soul and blind it, as we shall say below; and then they afflict and torment it, binding it to the mill of concupiscence; and the bonds with which it is bound are its own desires.

3. Wherefore God, having compassion on these that with such great labour, and at such cost to themselves, go about endeavouring to satisfy the hunger and thirst of their desire in the creatures, says to them through Isaias: *Omnes sitientes, venite ad aquas; et qui non habetis argentum, properate, emite, et comedite: venite, emite absque argento vinum et lac. Quare appenditis argentum non in panibus, et laborem vestrum non in saturitate?*<sup>4</sup> As though He were to say: All ye that have thirst of desire, come to the waters, and all ye that have no silver of your own will and desires, make haste; buy from Me and eat; come and buy from Me wine and milk (that is, spiritual sweetness and peace) without the silver of your own will, and without giving Me any labour in exchange for it, as ye give for your desires.<sup>5</sup> Wherefore do ye give the silver of your will<sup>6</sup> for that which is not bread—namely, that of the Divine Spirit—and set the labour of your desires upon that which cannot satisfy you? Come, hearkening to Me, and ye shall eat the good that ye desire and your soul shall delight itself in fatness.

4. This attaining to fatness is a going forth from all pleasures of the creatures; for the creatures torment, but the Spirit of God refreshes. And thus He calls us through Saint Matthew, saying: *Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos, et invenietis requiem animabus vestris.*<sup>7</sup> As though He were to say: All ye that go

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: '... figure in that strong man, Samson, who at one time was so strong,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'bound him to grind in a mill.']

<sup>3</sup> Judges xvi, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Isaias lv, 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> A, B repeat: 'wine and milk—that is, peace and sweetness.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'of your own will.'

<sup>7</sup> St. Matthew xi, 28-9.

about tormented, afflicted and burdened with the burden of your cares and desires, go forth from them, come to Me, and I will refresh you and ye shall find for your souls the rest which your desires take from you, wherefore they are a heavy burden, for David says of them: *Sicut onus grave gravata sunt super me.*<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER VIII

*Wherein is shown how the desires darken and blind the soul.*<sup>2</sup>

THE third evil that the desires cause in the soul is that they blind and darken it. Even as vapours darken the air and allow not the bright sun to shine; or as a mirror that is clouded over cannot receive within itself a clear image; or as water defiled by mud reflects not the visage of one that looks therein; even so the soul that is clouded by the desires is darkened in the understanding and allows neither<sup>3</sup> the sun of natural reason nor that of the supernatural Wisdom of God to shine upon it and illumine it clearly. And thus David, speaking to this purpose, says: *Comprehenderunt me iniquitates meæ, et non potui, ut viderem.*<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: Mine iniquities<sup>5</sup> have taken hold upon me, and I could have no power to see.

2. And, at this same time, when the soul is darkened in the understanding, it is benumbed also in the will, and the memory becomes dull and disordered in its due operation. For, as these faculties in their operations depend upon the understanding, it is clear that, when the understanding is impeded, they will become disordered and troubled. And thus David says: *Anima mea turbata est valde.*<sup>6</sup> That is: My soul is sorely troubled. Which is as much as to say, 'disordered in its faculties.' For, as we say, the understanding has no more capacity for receiving enlightenment from the wisdom of God than has the air, when it is dark, for receiving enlightenment from the sun; neither has the will any power to embrace God within itself in pure love, even as the mirror that is clouded with vapour has no power to reflect clearly within itself

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xxxvii, 5 [A.V., xxxviii, 4].

<sup>2</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'This is proved by quotations from the Sacred Scripture.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'gives no occasion either for,' etc.] Only Alc. reads thus. All the other authorities have: 'gives no light.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xxxix, 13 [A.V., xl, 12].

<sup>5</sup> So e.p. The other authorities have: 'My wickednesses.'

<sup>6</sup> Psalm vi, 4 [A.V., vi, 3].

any visage,<sup>1</sup> and even less power has the memory which is clouded by the darkness of desire to take clearly upon itself the form of the image of God, just as the muddied water cannot show forth clearly the visage of one that looks at himself therein.<sup>2</sup>

3. Desire blinds and darkens the soul; for desire, as such, is blind, since of itself it has no understanding in itself, the reason being to it always, as it were, a child leading a blind man.<sup>3</sup> And hence it comes to pass that, whensoever the soul is guided by its desire, it becomes blind; for this is as if one that sees were guided by one that sees not, which is, as it were, for both to be blind. And that which follows from this is that<sup>4</sup> which Our Lord says through Saint Matthew: *Si cæcus cæco ducatum præstet, ambo in foveam cadunt.*<sup>5</sup> 'If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit.' Of little use are its eyes to a moth, since desire for the beauty of the light dazzles it and leads it into the flame.<sup>6</sup> And even so we may say that one who feeds upon desire is like a fish that is dazzled, upon which the light acts rather as darkness, preventing it from seeing the snares which the fishermen are preparing for it. This is very well expressed by David himself, where he says of such persons: *Supercecidit ignis, et non viderunt solem.*<sup>7</sup> Which signifies: 'There came upon them the fire, which burns with its heat and dazzles with its light.'<sup>8</sup> And it is this that desire does to the soul, enkindling its concupiscence and dazzling its understanding so that it cannot see its light. For the cause of its being thus dazzled is that, when another light of a different kind is set before the eye, the visual faculty is attracted by<sup>9</sup> that which is interposed so that it sees not the other; and, as the desire is set so near to the soul as to be within the soul itself, the soul meets this first light and is attracted by<sup>10</sup> it; and thus it is unable to see the light of clear understanding, neither will see it until the dazzling power of desire is taken away from it.

4. For this reason one must greatly lament the ignorance of certain men, who burden themselves with extraordinary penances and with

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the present visage.'] A, B, c.p. have 'object' for 'visage.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Therein' is in c.p. only.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. has: '... is blind, since of itself it is unreasonable; and it is reason that always guides and directs the soul rightly in its operations.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'is exactly that.'

<sup>5</sup> St. Matthew xv, 14.

<sup>6</sup> [*hoguera*. More exactly: 'fire,' 'bonfire,' 'blaze.']

<sup>7</sup> Psalm lvii, 9 [cf. A.V., lviii, 8].

<sup>8</sup> So Alc. The other MSS. have: 'The light fell upon them and struck their eyes and dazzled them.' E.p. reads: 'The fire came upon them and they saw not the sun.'

<sup>9</sup> Alc. has: 'is blinded by,' probably a copyist's error [*cicgase* for *cébase*].

<sup>10</sup> Here A and B have *cicgase*, whereas Alc. and c.p. read *cébase*.

many other voluntary practices, and think that this practice or that will suffice to bring them to the union of Divine Wisdom<sup>1</sup>; but such will not be the case if they endeavour not diligently to mortify their desires. If they were careful to bestow half of that labour on this, they would profit more in a month than they profit by all the other practices in many years. For, just as it is necessary to till the earth if it is to bear fruit, and unless it be tilled it bears naught but weeds, just so is mortification of the desires necessary if the soul is to profit. Without this mortification, I make bold to say, the soul no more achieves progress on the road to perfection and to the knowledge of God and of itself, however many efforts it may make, than the seed grows when it is cast upon<sup>2</sup> untilled ground. Wherefore the darkness and rudeness of the soul will not be taken from it until the desires be quenched. For these desires are like cataracts, or like moles in the eye, which obstruct the sight until they be taken away.

5. And thus David, realizing how blind are these souls, and how completely impeded from beholding the light of truth, and how wroth is God with them, speaks to them, saying: *Priusquam intelligerent spinæ vestræ rhamnum: sicut viventes, sic in ira absorbet eos.*<sup>3</sup> And this is as though He had said: Before your thorns (that is, your desires) harden and grow, changing from tender thorns into a thick hedge and shutting out the sight of God even as oft-times the living find their thread of life broken in the midst of its course, even so will God swallow them up in His wrath.<sup>4</sup> For the desires that are living in the soul, so that it cannot understand Him,<sup>5</sup> will be swallowed up by God by means of chastisement and correction, either in this life or in the next, and this will come to pass through purgation. And He says that He will swallow them up in wrath, because that which is suffered in the mortification of the desires is punishment for the ruin which they have wrought in the soul.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p. has: 'who burden themselves with unrestrained [*lit.*, *desordenadas*, 'disordered', 'unruly'] penances and with many other unrestrained practices—I mean voluntary ones—and place their confidence in these, and think that these alone, without any mortification of their desires in other respects, will be sufficient to bring them to the union of Divine Wisdom.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'being scattered over.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lvii, 10 [A.V., lviii, 9].

<sup>4</sup> [P. Silverio following] Alc. reads: 'Before your thorns (that is, your desires) understood, even as the living, after this manner He will swallow them up in His wrath.' All the other MSS., however, and also e.p., read as in the text.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'before it can understand God.']

<sup>6</sup> E.p. reads: 'For God in His wrath will swallow up those whose desires live in the soul and shut out the knowledge of God, either in the next life in the affliction and purgation of purgatory, or in this life with afflictions and trials which He sends to detach them

6. Oh, if men but knew how great is the blessing of Divine light whereof they are deprived by this blindness which proceeds from their affections and desires, and into what great hurts and evils these make them to fall day after day, for so long as they mortify them not! For a man must not rely upon a clear understanding, or upon gifts that he has received from God, and think that he may indulge his affection or desire, and will not be blinded and darkened, and fall gradually into a worse estate. For who would have said that a man so perfect in wisdom and the gifts of God as was Solomon would have been reduced to such blindness and torpor of the will as to make altars to so many idols and to worship them himself, when he was old?<sup>1</sup> Yet no more was needed to bring him to this than the affection which he had for women and his neglect to deny the desires and delights of his heart. For he himself says concerning himself, in Ecclesiastes, that he denied not his heart that which it demanded of him.<sup>2</sup> And this man was capable of being so completely led away by his desires that, although it is true that at the beginning he was cautious, nevertheless, because he denied them not, they gradually blinded and darkened his understanding, so that in the end they succeeded in quenching that great light of wisdom which God had given him, and therefore in his old age he forsook God.

7. And if unmortified desires could do so much in this man who knew so well the distance that lies between good and evil, what will they not be capable of accomplishing by working upon our ignorance? For we, as God<sup>3</sup> said to the prophet Jonas concerning the Ninivites, cannot discern between<sup>4</sup> our right hand and our left.<sup>5</sup> At every step we hold evil to be good, and good, evil, and this arises from our own nature. What, then, will come to pass if to our natural darkness is added the hindrance of desire<sup>6</sup>? Naught but that which Isaias describes thus: *Palpavimus, sicut cæci parietem, et quasi absque oculis attrectavimus: inpegimus meridie, quasi in tenebris.*<sup>7</sup> The prophet is speaking with those who love to follow these their desires. It is as if he had said: We have groped for the wall as though we were blind, and we have been groping as though we had no eyes, and our blindness has attained to

from their desires, or through the mortification of their own desires. This God does that He may remove thereby the false light of desire which is between Himself and us, and which was dazzling us and hindering us from knowing Him; so that, the sight of the understanding being enlightened, the ruin wrought by the desires may be repaired.'

<sup>1</sup> 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] xi, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastes ii, 10.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'as the Lord.'

<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'we . . . know not what there is between.']

<sup>5</sup> Jonas iv, 11.

<sup>6</sup> [Lit., 'is added desire.']

<sup>7</sup> Isaias lix, 10.

such a point that we have stumbled at midday as though it were in the darkness.<sup>1</sup> For he that is blinded by desire has this property, that, when he is set in the midst of truth and of that which is good for him, he can no more see them than if he were in darkness.

## CHAPTER IX

*Wherein is described how the desires defile the soul. This is proved by comparisons and quotations from Holy Scripture.*

THE fourth evil which the desires cause in the soul is that they stain and defile it, as is taught in Ecclesiasticus, in these words: *Qui tetigerit picem, inquinabitur ab ea.*<sup>2</sup> This signifies: He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it. And a man touches pitch when he allows the desire of his will to be satisfied by any creature. Here it is to be noted that the Wise Man compares the creatures to pitch; for there is more difference between excellence of soul<sup>3</sup> and the best of the creatures<sup>4</sup> than there is between pure diamond,<sup>5</sup> or fine gold, and pitch. And just as gold or diamond, if it were heated and placed upon pitch, would become foul and be stained by it, inasmuch as the heat would have cajoled and allured the pitch, even so the soul that is hot with desire for any creature draws forth<sup>6</sup> foulness from it through the heat of its desire and is stained by it. And there is more difference between the soul and other corporeal creatures than between a liquid that is highly clarified and mud that is most foul. Wherefore, even as such a liquid would be defiled if it were mingled with mud, so is the soul defiled that clings to creatures, since by doing this it becomes like to the said creatures. And in the same way that traces of soot would defile a face that is very lovely and perfect, even in this way do disordered desires befoul and defile the soul that has them, the which soul is in itself a most lovely and perfect image of God.

2. Wherefore Jeremias, lamenting the ravages of foulness which

<sup>1</sup> E.p. has slight verbal variations here, the chief being 'as in darkness' for 'as though we had no eyes,' and 'in obscurity' for 'in the darkness.'

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiasticus xiii, 1.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'between the excellence which the soul may have.'

<sup>4</sup> [More literally: 'and all the best that is of the creatures.' 'Best' is neuter and refers to qualities, appurtenances, etc.]

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'bright diamond.']

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'even so the soul, in the heat of its desire which it has for any creature, derives,' etc.

these disordered affections cause in the soul, speaks first of its beauty, and then of its foulness, saying: *Candidiores sunt Nazarai ejus nive, nitidiores lacte, rubicundiores ebore antiquo, sapphiro pulchriores. Denigrata est super carbones facies eorum, et non sunt cogniti in plateis.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: Its hair—that is to say, that of the soul—is more excellent in whiteness<sup>2</sup> than the snow, clearer<sup>3</sup> than milk, and ruddier than old ivory, and lovelier than the sapphire stone. Their face has now become blacker than coal and they are not known in the streets.<sup>4</sup> By the hair we here understand the affections and thoughts of the soul, which, ordered as God orders them—that is, in God Himself<sup>5</sup>—are whiter than snow, and clearer<sup>6</sup> than milk, and ruddier than ivory,<sup>7</sup> and lovelier than the sapphire. By these four things is understood every kind of beauty and excellence of corporeal creatures, higher than which, says the writer, are the soul and its operations, which are the Nazarites or the hair aforementioned; the which Nazarites, being unruly,<sup>8</sup> with their lives ordered in a way that God ordered not—that is, being set upon the creatures—have their face (says Jeremias) made and turned blacker than coal.

3. All this harm, and more, is done to the beauty of the soul by its unruly desires for the things of this world;<sup>9</sup> so much so that, if we set out to speak of the foul and vile appearance that the desires can give the soul, we should find nothing, however full of cobwebs and worms it might be, not even the corruption of a dead body, nor aught else that is impure and vile, nor aught that can exist and be imagined in this life, to which we could compare it. For, although it is true that the unruly soul, in its natural being,<sup>10</sup> is as perfect as when God created it, yet, in its reasonable being, it is vile, abominable,<sup>11</sup> foul, black and full of all the evils that are here being described, and many more. For, as we shall afterwards say, a single unruly desire, although there be in it no matter of mortal sin, suffices to bring a soul into such bondage, foulness and

<sup>1</sup> Lamentations iv, 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> A: 'is whiter than whiteness, than the snow.' B: 'is lovelier than whiteness, than the snow.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, *mds resplandecientes*, 'more brilliant,' 'more luminous.']

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, *plazas* (derived from the Latin *plateas*), which now, however, has the meaning of 'squares,' '(market) places.']

<sup>5</sup> Alc. omits, perhaps by an oversight: 'that . . . Himself.'

<sup>6</sup> ['Clearer' here is *mds claros*; the adjective is rendered 'bright' on p. 43, n. 5.]

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'than old ivory.'

<sup>8</sup> [The words translated 'unruly,' 'disordered,' here and elsewhere, and occasionally 'unrestrained,' are the same in the original: *desordenado*. Cf. p. 41, n. 1.]

<sup>9</sup> E.p. omits: 'for the things of this world.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: 'natural substance.'

<sup>11</sup> E.p. omits 'abominable.'

vileness that it can in no wise come to accord with God in union<sup>1</sup> until the desire be purified. What, then, will be the vileness of the soul that is completely unrestrained with respect to its own passions and given up to its desires, and how far removed will it be from God and from His purity?

4. It is impossible to explain in words, or to cause to be understood by the understanding, what variety of impurity is caused in the soul by a variety of desires. For, if it could be expressed and understood, it would be a wondrous thing, and one also which would fill us with pity, to see how each desire, in accordance with its quality and degree, be it greater or smaller, leaves in the soul its mark and deposit<sup>2</sup> of impurity and vileness, and how one single disorder of the reason can be the source of innumerable different impurities, some greater, some less, each one after its kind.<sup>3</sup> For, even as the soul of the righteous man has in one single perfection, which is uprightness of soul, innumerable gifts of the greatest richness, and many virtues of the greatest loveliness, each one different and full of grace after its kind according to the multitude and the diversity of the affections of love which it has had in God, even so the unruly soul, according to the variety of the desires which it has for the creatures, has in itself a miserable variety of impurities and meannesses, wherewith it is endowed<sup>4</sup> by the said desires.

5. The variety of these desires<sup>5</sup> is well illustrated in the Book of Ezechiel, where it is written that God showed this Prophet, in the interior of the Temple, painted around its walls, all likenesses of creeping things which crawl on the ground, and all the abomination of unclean beasts.<sup>6</sup> And then God said to Ezechiel: 'Son of man, hast thou not indeed seen the abominations that these do, each one in the secrecy of his chamber?'<sup>7</sup> And God commanded the Prophet to go in farther and he would see greater abominations; and he says that he there saw women seated, weeping for Adonis, the god of love.<sup>8</sup> And God commanded him to go in farther still, and he would see yet greater abominations, and he says that he saw there five-and-twenty old men whose backs were turned toward the Temple.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: '... of mortal sin, befouls and stains the soul and renders it unfit to come to accord with God in perfect union.' A, B: 'in any union.' [The Spanish of the text reads literally: 'in a union.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... how each desire, in agreement with its quality and intention, leaves its mark and deposit,' etc.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'and how ... its kind.'

<sup>4</sup> [The verb is *pintar*, 'paint': perhaps 'corrupt' is intended. The same verb occurs in the following sentence.]

<sup>5</sup> A, B, e.p. have: 'of impurities.'

<sup>7</sup> [Ezechiel viii, 12.]

<sup>8</sup> Ezechiel viii, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Ezechiel viii, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Ezechiel viii, 16

6. The diversity of creeping things and unclean beasts that were painted in the first chamber of the Temple are the thoughts and conceptions which the understanding fashions from the lowly things of earth, and from all the creatures, which are painted, just as they are, in the temple of the soul, when the soul<sup>1</sup> embarrasses its understanding with them, which is the soul's first habitation. The women that were farther within, in the second habitation, weeping for the god Adonis, are the desires that are in the second faculty of the soul, which is the will; the which are, as it were, weeping, inasmuch as they covet that to which the will is affectioned, which are the creeping things painted in the understanding. And the men that were in the third habitation<sup>2</sup> are the images and representations of the creatures, which the third part<sup>3</sup> of the soul—namely memory—keeps and reflects upon<sup>4</sup> within itself. Of these it is said that their backs are turned toward the Temple because when the soul, according to these three faculties, completely and perfectly embraces anything that is of the earth, it can be said to have its back turned toward the Temple of God, which is the right reason of the soul, which admits within itself nothing that is of creatures.<sup>5</sup>

7. And let this now suffice for the understanding of this foul disorder of the soul with respect to its desires. For if we had to treat in detail of the lesser foulness<sup>6</sup> which these imperfections and their variety make and cause in the soul, and that which is caused by venial sins, which is still greater than that of the imperfections, and their great variety, and likewise that which is caused by the desires for mortal sin, which is complete foulness of the soul, and its great variety, according to the variety and multitude of all these three things, we should never end, nor would the understanding of angels suffice to understand it.<sup>7</sup> That which I say, and that which is to the point for my purpose, is that any desire, although it be for but the smallest imperfection, stains and defiles the soul.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'which, being so contrary to things eternal, defile the temple of the soul, and the soul,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> So Alc., e.p. A, B and some editions have: 'third chamber.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'third faculty.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'revolves'— 'turns over in its mind' in our common idiom.]

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'admits within itself no created thing that is opposed to God.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'of the impediment to this union.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. shortens: 'and its great diversity, we should never end.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'stains . . . soul,' leaving the sentence incomplete.

## CHAPTER X

*Wherein is described how the desires weaken the soul in virtue and make it lukewarm.*<sup>1</sup>

THE fifth way in which the desires harm the soul is by making it lukewarm and weak, so that it has no strength to follow after virtue and to persevere therein. For as the strength of the desire, when it is set upon various aims, is less than if it were set wholly on one thing alone, and as, the more are the aims whereon it is set, the less of it there is for each one of them, for this cause philosophers say that virtue in union is stronger than if it be dispersed. Wherefore it is clear that, if the desire of the will be dispersed among other things than virtue, it must be weaker as regards virtue. And thus the soul whose will is set upon various trifles is like water, which, having a place below wherein to empty itself, never rises; and such a soul has no profit. For this cause the patriarch Jacob compared his son Ruben to water poured out, because in a certain sin he had given rein to his desires. And he said: 'Thou art poured out like water; grow thou not.'<sup>2</sup> As though he had said: Since thou art poured out like water as to the desires, thou shalt not grow in virtue. And thus, as hot water, when uncovered, readily loses heat, and as aromatic spices, when they are unwrapped,<sup>3</sup> gradually lose the fragrance and strength of their perfume, even so the soul that is not recollected in one single desire for God loses heat and vigour in its virtue. This was well understood by David, when he said, speaking with God: I will keep my strength for Thee.<sup>4</sup> That is, concentrating the strength of my desires<sup>5</sup> upon Thee alone.

2. And the desires weaken the virtue of the soul, because they are to it like the shoots<sup>6</sup> that grow about a tree, and take away its virtue so that it cannot bring forth so much fruit. And of such souls as these says the Lord: *Væ prægnantibus, et nutrientibus in illis diebus.*<sup>7</sup> That is: Woe to them that in those days are with child and to them that give suck. This being with child and giving suck is understood with respect to the desires; which, if they be not pruned, will ever be taking more virtue from the soul, and will grow to the harm of the soul, like the shoots upon the tree. Wherefore Our Lord counsels us, saying: Have

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'This is proved by comparisons and quotations from the Sacred Scripture.'

<sup>2</sup> Genesis xlix, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lviii, 10 [A.V., lix, 9].

<sup>4</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'like the twigs and shoots.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B: '... spices, not being covered.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'my affections.'

<sup>7</sup> St. Matthew xxiv, 19.

your loins girt about!— the loins signifying here the desires. And indeed, they are also like leeches, which are ever sucking the blood from the veins, for thus the Preacher terms them when he says: The leeches are the daughters— that is, the desires—saying ever: *Daca, daca.*<sup>2</sup>

3. From this it is clear that the desires bring no good to the soul but rather take from it that which it has; and, if it mortify them not, they will not cease till they have wrought in it that which the children of the viper are said to work in their mother; who, as they are growing within her womb, consume her and kill her, and they themselves remain alive at her cost. Just so the desires that are not mortified grow to such a point that they kill the soul with respect to God because it has not first killed them. And they alone live in it. Wherefore the Preacher says: *Aufer a me Domine ventris concupiscentias.*<sup>3</sup>

4. And, even though they reach not this point, it is very piteous to consider how the desires that live in this poor soul treat it, how unhappy it is with regard to itself, how dry with respect to its neighbours, and how weary and slothful with respect to the things of God. For there is no evil humour that makes it as wearisome and difficult for a sick man to walk, or gives him a distaste for eating comparable to the weariness and distaste for following virtue which is given to a soul by desire for creatures. And thus the reason why many souls have no diligence and eagerness to gain<sup>4</sup> virtue is, as a rule, that they have desires and affections which are not pure and are not fixed upon God.<sup>5</sup>

## CHAPTER XI

*Wherein it is proved necessary that the soul that would attain to Divine union should be free from desires, however slight they be.*<sup>6</sup>

**I** EXPECT that for a long time the reader has been wishing to ask whether it be necessary, in order to attain to this high estate of perfection, to undergo first of all total mortification in all the desires, great and small, or if it will suffice to mortify some of them and to leave

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xii, 35.

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs xxx, 15. All the codices have this reading. E.p. reads: 'saying ever: "Give me, give me."'

<sup>3</sup> Ecclesiasticus xxiii, 6. [In the original the last two sentences are transposed.]

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'to work virtue.' E.p.: 'to work virtues.'

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'not pure on (or 'in') God.'] E.p. adds: 'our Lord.'

<sup>6</sup> So e.p. Ale. differs slightly here, chiefly by using a stronger word [*minimes*] for 'slight.' We might read: 'how very slight soever.'

others, those at least which seem of little moment. For it appears to be a severe and most difficult thing for the soul to be able to attain to such purity and detachment that it has no will and affection for anything.

2. To this I reply: first, that it is true that all the desires are not equally hurtful, nor do they all equally embarrass the soul.<sup>1</sup> I am speaking of those that are voluntary, for the natural desires hinder the soul little, if at all, from attaining to union, when they are not consented to nor pass beyond the first movements (I mean,<sup>2</sup> all those wherein the rational will has had no part, whether at first or afterward); and to take away these—that is, to mortify them wholly in this life—is impossible. And these hinder not the soul in such a way as to prevent its attainment to Divine union, even though they be not, as I say, wholly mortified; for the natural man may well have them, and yet the soul may be quite free from them according to the rational spirit. For it will sometimes come to pass that the soul will be in the full<sup>3</sup> union of the prayer of quiet in the will at the very time when these desires are dwelling in the sensual part of the soul,<sup>4</sup> and yet the higher part, which is in prayer, will have nothing to do with them. But all the other voluntary desires, whether they be of mortal sin, which are the gravest, or of venial sin, which are less grave, or whether they be only of imperfections, which are the least grave of all, must be driven away every one, and the soul must be free from them all, howsoever slight they be, if it is to come to this complete union; and the reason is that the state of this Divine union consists in the soul's total transformation, according to the will, in the will of God, so that there may be naught in the soul that is contrary to the will of God, but that,<sup>5</sup> in all and through all, its movement may be that of the will of God alone.

3. It is for this reason that we say of this state that it is the making of two wills into one—namely, into the will of God, which will<sup>6</sup> of God is likewise the will of the soul. For if this soul desired any imperfection that God wills not, there would not be made one will of God, since the soul would have a will for that which God has not. It is clear, then, that for the soul to come to unite itself perfectly with God through love and will, it must first be free from all desire of the will, howsoever

<sup>1</sup> Alc. omits several lines here, but apparently only through the copyist's negligence.

<sup>2</sup> [The original has no such explanatory phrase.] E.p. [however] reads: 'And I mean by "natural" and "first movements" all those. . . etc.'

<sup>3</sup> [That is, will be enjoying all the union that the prayer of quiet gives.] B, e.p. have: 'in high union.'

<sup>4</sup> Thus A, B. The other authorities [and P. Silverio] read: 'of man.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: '[and] so that.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'the making into one will of God—that is, of my will and the will of God, so that the will,' etc.

slight. That is, that it must not intentionally and knowingly consent with the will to imperfections, and it must have power and liberty to be able not so to consent intentionally. I say knowingly, because, unintentionally and unknowingly, or without having<sup>1</sup> the power to do otherwise, it may well fall into imperfections and venial sins, and into the natural desires whereof we have spoken; for of such sins as these which are not voluntary and surreptitious<sup>2</sup> it is written that the just man shall fall seven times in the day and shall rise up again.<sup>3</sup> But of the voluntary desires, which, though they be for very small things, are, as I have said, intentional venial sins, any one that is not conquered suffices to impede union.<sup>4</sup> I mean, if this habit be not mortified; for sometimes certain acts of different desires have not as much power when the habits are mortified.<sup>5</sup> Still, the soul will attain to the stage of not having even these, for they likewise proceed from a habit of imperfection. But some habits of voluntary imperfections, which are never completely conquered, prevent not only the attainment of Divine union, but also progress in perfection.

4. These habitual imperfections are, for example, a common custom of much speaking, or some slight attachment which we never quite wish to conquer—such as that to a person, a garment, a book, a cell, a particular kind of food, tittle-tattle, fancies for tasting, knowing or hearing certain things, and suchlike. Any one of these imperfections, if the soul has become attached and habituated to it, is of as great harm to its growth and progress in virtue as though it were to fall daily into many other imperfections and casual venial sins<sup>6</sup> which proceed not from a habitual indulgence in any habitual<sup>7</sup> and harmful attachment, and will not hinder it so much as when it has attachment to anything. For as long as it has this there is no possibility that it will make progress in perfection, even though the imperfection<sup>8</sup> be extremely slight. For it comes to the same thing whether a bird be held by a slender cord or by a stout one; since, even if it be slender, the bird will be as well held as though it were stout, for so long as it breaks it not and flies not

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'without wholly having.'

<sup>2</sup> These last two words occur in Alc. alone.

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs xxiv, 16.

<sup>4</sup> [The original omits 'union.'] Only Alc. reads: 'which are intentional venial sins.' E.p. reads: 'But of desires which are voluntary and quite intentional, though they be for very small things, as has been said, any one that is not conquered suffices to impede.'

<sup>5</sup> Alc. only has: 'when . . . mortified.' E.p. substitutes: 'since they have not become a definite habit.' A, B read similarly, but omit 'not.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'many other and even greater imperfections.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits this second 'habitual.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'that the soul will reach perfection, though the thing,' etc.

away. It is true that the slender one is the easier to break; still, easy though it be, the bird will not fly away if it be not broken. And thus the soul that has attachment to anything, however much virtue it possess, will not attain to the liberty of Divine union. For the desire and the attachment of the soul have that power which the sucking-fish<sup>1</sup> is said to have when it clings to a ship; for, though but a very small fish, if it succeed in clinging to the ship, it makes it incapable of reaching the port, or of sailing on at all. It is sad to see certain souls in this plight; like rich vessels, they are laden with wealth and good works and spiritual exercises, and with the virtues and the favours that God grants them; and yet, because they have not the resolution to break with some whim or attachment or affection (which all come to the same thing), they never make progress or reach the port of perfection,<sup>2</sup> though they would need to do no more than make one good flight and thus to snap that cord of desire right off, or to rid themselves of that sucking-fish of desire which clings to them.<sup>3</sup>

5. It is greatly to be lamented that, when God has granted them strength to break other and stouter cords<sup>4</sup>—namely, affections for sins and vanities—they should fail to attain<sup>5</sup> to such blessing because they have not shaken off some childish thing which God had bidden them conquer<sup>6</sup> for love of Him, and which is nothing more than a thread or a hair.<sup>7</sup> And, what is worse, not only do they make no progress, but because of this attachment they fall back,<sup>8</sup> lose that<sup>9</sup> which they have gained, and retrace that part of the road along which they have travelled<sup>10</sup> at the cost of so much time and labour; for it is well known that, on this road, not to go forward is to turn back, and not to be gaining is to be losing. This Our Lord desired to teach us when He said: 'He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth.'<sup>11</sup> He that takes not the trouble to repair the vessel, however slight be the crack in it, is likely to spill all the liquid that is within it. The Preacher taught us this clearly when he said: He

<sup>1</sup> [Or 'remora.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'neither can reach the port of perfect union.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'which clings to them.'

<sup>4</sup> [*cordelas*: a stronger word than that used above (*hilo*), which, if the context would permit, might better be translated 'string'—its equivalent in modern speech. Below, *hilo* is translated 'thread.']

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'fail to progress and to attain.'

<sup>6</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'God left them to conquer.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits: 'or a hair.' [*Hilo*, rendered 'thread,' as explained in n. 4 above, can also be taken in the stronger sense of 'cord.']

<sup>8</sup> E.p. adds: 'in the matter of perfection.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'losing something of that.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p. omits: 'and retrace . . . travelled.'

<sup>11</sup> St. Matthew xii, 30. E.p. reads: 'For we know that, on this spiritual road, not to go forward conquering is to turn back; and not to be gaining is to be losing. This Our Lord desired to teach us when He said: He that gathereth not with Me, scattereth.'

that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.<sup>1</sup> For, as he himself says, a great fire cometh from a single spark.<sup>2</sup> And thus one imperfection is sufficient to lead to another; and these lead to yet more; wherefore you will hardly ever see a soul that is negligent in conquering one desire, and that has not many more arising from the same weakness and imperfection that this desire causes. In this way they are continually falling; we have seen many persons to whom God has been granting the favour of leading them a long way, into a state of great detachment and liberty, yet who, merely through beginning to indulge some slight attachment, under the pretext of doing good, or in the guise of conversation and friendship, often lose their spirituality and desire for God and holy solitude, fall from the joy and whole-hearted devotion which they had in their spiritual exercises, and cease not until they have lost everything; and this because they broke not with that beginning of sensual desire and pleasure and kept not themselves in solitude for God.

6. Upon this road we must ever journey in order to attain our goal; which means that we must ever be mortifying our desires and not indulging them; and if they are not all completely mortified we shall not completely attain. For even as a log of wood may fail to be transformed in the fire because a single degree of heat is wanting to it, even so the soul will not be transformed in God if it have but one imperfection, although it be something less than voluntary desire;<sup>3</sup> for, as we shall say hereafter concerning the night of faith, the soul has only one will, and that will, if it be embarrassed by aught and set upon aught, is not free,<sup>4</sup> solitary and pure, as is necessary for Divine transformation.

7. Of this that has been said we have a figure in the Book of the Judges, where it is related that the angel came to the children of Israel and said to them that, because they had not destroyed that froward people, but had made a league with some of them, they would therefore be left among them as enemies, that they might be to them an occasion of stumbling and perdition.<sup>5</sup> And just so does God deal with certain souls: though He has taken them out of the world,<sup>6</sup> and slain the giants, their sins, and destroyed the multitude of their enemies, which are the occasions of sin that they encountered in the world, solely that they

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus xix, 1. E.p. adds: 'in great things.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the fire is increased by a single spark.'] Ecclesiasticus xi, 34 [A.V., xi, 32].

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'although . . . desire.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'is not completely free.'

<sup>5</sup> Judges ii, 3.

<sup>6</sup> A, B: 'of the perils of the world.' E.p.: 'of the Egypt of the world.'

may enter this Promised Land of Divine union with greater liberty, yet they harbour friendship and make alliance with the insignificant peoples<sup>1</sup>—that is, with imperfections—and mortify them not completely; therefore Our Lord is angry, and allows them<sup>2</sup> to fall into their desires and go from bad to worse.

8. In the Book of Josue, again, we have a figure of what has just been said—where we read that God commanded Josue, at the time that he had to enter into possession of the Promised Land, to destroy all things that were in the city of Jericho, in such wise as to leave therein nothing alive, man or woman, young or old, and to slay all the beasts, and to take naught, neither to covet aught, of all the spoils.<sup>3</sup> This He said that we may understand how, if a man is to enter this Divine union, all that lives in his soul must die, both little and much, small and great, and that the soul must be without desire for all this, and detached from it, even as though it existed not for the soul, neither the soul for it. This Saint Paul teaches us clearly in his epistle *ad Corinthios*, saying: ‘This I say to you, brethren, that the time is short; it remains, and it behoves you, that they that have wives should be as if they had none; and they that weep for the things of this world, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not;<sup>4</sup> and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not.’<sup>5</sup> This the Apostle says to us in order to teach us how complete must be the detachment of our soul from all things if it is to journey to God.

## CHAPTER XII

*Which treats of the answer to another question,<sup>6</sup> explaining what the desires are that suffice to cause the evils aforementioned in the soul.*

WE might write at greater length upon this matter of the night of sense, saying all that there is to say concerning the harm which is caused by the desires, not only in the ways aforementioned, but in many others. But for our purpose that which has

<sup>1</sup> [The original phrase (*gente menuda*) means ‘little folk.’ It is used of children and sometimes also of insects and other small creatures. There is a marked antithesis between the ‘giants,’ or sins, and the ‘little folk,’ or imperfections.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: ‘therefore, since they live negligently and slothfully, His Majesty is wroth and allows them,’ etc.

<sup>3</sup> Josue vi, 21.

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits this clause.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians vii, 29-31.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: ‘Answers another question.’

been said suffices; for we believe we have made it clear in what way the mortification of these desires is called night, and how it behoves us to enter this night in order to journey to God. The only thing that remains, before we treat of the manner of entrance therein, in order to bring this part to a close, is a question concerning what has been said which might occur to the reader.

2. It may first be asked if any desire can be sufficient to work and produce in the soul the two evils aforementioned—namely, the privative, which consists in depriving the soul of the grace of God, and the positive, which consists in producing within it the five serious evils whereof we have spoken.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, it may be asked if any desire, however slight it be and of whatever kind, suffices to produce all these together,<sup>2</sup> or if some desires produce some and others produce others. If, for example, some produce torment; others, weariness; others, darkness, etc.

3. Answering this question, I say, first of all, that with respect to the privative evil—which consists in the soul's being deprived of God—this is wrought wholly,<sup>3</sup> and can only be wrought, by the voluntary desires, which are of the matter of mortal sin; for they deprive the soul of grace in this life, and of glory, which is the possession of God, in the next. In the second place, I say that both those desires which are of the matter of mortal sin, and the voluntary desires, which are of the matter of venial sin, and those that are of the matter of imperfection, are each sufficient to produce in the soul all these positive evils together; the which evils, although in a certain way they are privative, we here call positive, since they correspond to a turning towards the creature, even as the privative evils correspond to a turning away from God.<sup>4</sup> But there is this difference, that the desires which are of mortal sin produce total blindness, torment, impurity, weakness, etc. Those others, however, which are of the matter of venial sin or imperfection,<sup>5</sup> produce not these evils in a complete and supreme degree, since they deprive not the soul of grace, upon the loss of which depends the possession of them,<sup>6</sup> since the death of the soul is their life; but they produce them in the soul remissly, proportionately to the remission of grace which these

<sup>1</sup> E.p. abbreviates: '... produce in the soul the two evils, positive and privative, already described.'

<sup>2</sup> So Alc. A, e.p. have: 'all these five evils together.' B: 'all these evils together.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits 'wholly.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'the which ... from God.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'or known imperfection.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: '... of grace, with the which privation goes together the possession of them.'

desires produce in the soul.<sup>1</sup> So that that desire which most weakens grace will produce the most abundant torment, blindness and defilement.<sup>2</sup>

4. It should be noted, however, that, although each desire produces all these evils, which we here term positive, there are some which, principally and directly, produce some of them, and others which produce others, and the remainder are produced consequently upon these. For, although it is true that one sensual desire produces all these evils, yet its principal and proper effect is the defilement of soul and body. And, although one avaricious desire likewise produces them all, its principal and direct result is to produce misery. And, although similarly one vainglorious desire produces them all, its principal and direct result is to produce darkness and blindness.<sup>3</sup> And, although one gluttonous desire produces them all, its principal result is to produce lukewarmness in virtue. And even so is it with the rest.

5. And the reason why any act of voluntary desire produces in the soul all these effects together lies in the direct contrariety which exists between them and all the acts of virtue which produce the contrary effects in the soul. For, even as an act of virtue produces and begets in the soul sweetness, peace, consolation, light, cleanness and fortitude all together, even so an unruly desire causes torment, fatigue, weariness, blindness and weakness. All the virtues grow through the practice of any one of them, and all the vices grow through the practice of any one of them likewise, and the remnants<sup>4</sup> of each grow in the soul. And although all these evils are not evident at the moment when the desire is indulged, since the resulting pleasure gives no occasion for them, yet the evil remnants which they leave are clearly perceived, whether before or afterwards. This is very well illustrated by that book which the angel commanded Saint John to eat, in the Apocalypse, the which book was sweetness to his mouth, and in his belly bitterness.<sup>5</sup> For the desire, when it is carried into effect, is sweet and appears to be good, but its bitter taste is felt afterwards; the truth of this can be clearly proved by anyone who allows himself to be led away by it. Yet I am not ignorant that there are some men so blind and insensible as not to

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'But they produce something of these evils, although remissly, proportionately to the lukewarmness and remissness which they produce in the soul.' [The word here translated 'remissness' is rendered 'remission' in the text, where it seems to have a slightly different meaning.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'will more abundantly produce torment, blindness and non-purity.'

<sup>3</sup> Alc. unintentionally omits this sentence.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'the effects.' [The word translated 'remnants' also means 'after-taste.']

<sup>5</sup> Apocalypse x, 9. This sentence is omitted by e.p.

feel this, for, as they do not walk in God, they are unable to perceive that which hinders them from approaching Him.

6. I am not writing here of the other natural desires which are not voluntary, and of thoughts that go not beyond the first movements, and other temptations to which the soul is not consenting; for these produce in the soul none of the evils aforementioned. For, although a person who suffers from them may think that the passion and disturbance which they then produce in him are defiling and blinding him, this is not the case; rather they are bringing him the opposite advantages.<sup>1</sup> For, in so far as he resists them, he gains fortitude, purity, light and consolation, and many blessings, even as Our Lord said to Saint Paul: That virtue was made perfect in weakness.<sup>2</sup> But the voluntary desires work all the evils aforementioned, and more. Wherefore the principal care of spiritual masters is to mortify their disciples immediately with respect to any desire soever, by causing them to remain without the objects of their desires, in order to free them from such great misery.

## CHAPTER XIII

*Wherein is described the manner and way which the soul must follow in order to enter this night of sense.*<sup>3</sup>

IT now remains for me to give certain counsels whereby the soul may know how to enter this night of sense and may be able so to do. To this end it must be known that the soul habitually enters this night of sense in two ways: the one is active; the other passive. The active way consists in that which the soul can do, and does,<sup>4</sup> of itself, in order to enter therein, whereof we shall now treat in the counsels which follow. The passive way is that wherein the soul does nothing,<sup>5</sup> and God works in it, and it remains, as it were, patient.<sup>6</sup> Of this we shall treat in the fourth book,<sup>7</sup> where we shall be treating of

<sup>1</sup> E.p. inserts the important modifying adverb 'occasionally.'

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 9. ['Virtue' had often, in the author's day, much of the meaning of the modern word 'strength.']

<sup>3</sup> The title in e.p. is: 'Of the manner and way which the soul must follow in order to enter this night of sense through faith.'

<sup>4</sup> The earlier editions add: 'aided by grace.'

<sup>5</sup> The earlier editions add: 'as of itself or by its own effort.'

<sup>6</sup> The earlier editions have: 'but God works it in the soul with more special aids, and the soul is, as it were, patient, consenting thereto freely.'

<sup>7</sup> The earlier editions have: 'in the *Dark Night*': it is, of course, that treatise that is referred to.

beginners. And because there, with the Divine favour, we shall give many counsels to beginners, according to the many imperfections which they are apt to have while on this road, I shall not spend time in giving many here. And this, too, because it belongs not to this place to give them, as at present we are treating only of the reasons for which this journey is called a night, and of what kind it is, and how many parts it has. But, as it seems that it would be incomplete, and less profitable than it should be, if we gave no help or counsel here for walking in this night of desires, I have thought well to set down briefly here the way which is to be followed: and I shall do the same at the end of each of the next two parts, or causes, of this night, whereof, with the help of the Lord, I have to treat.

2. These counsels for the conquering of the desires, which now follow, albeit brief and few, I believe to be as profitable and efficacious as they are concise; so that one who sincerely desires to practise them will need no others, but will find them all included in these.

3. First, let him have an habitual desire<sup>1</sup> to imitate Christ in everything that he does, conforming himself to His life; upon which life he must meditate so that he may know how to imitate it, and to behave in all things as Christ would behave.

4. Secondly, in order that he may be able to do this well, every pleasure that presents itself to the senses, if it be not purely for the honour and glory of God, must be renounced and completely rejected for the love of Jesus Christ, Who in this life had no other pleasure, neither desired any, than to do the will of His Father, which He called His meat and food.<sup>2</sup> I take this example. If there present itself to a man the pleasure of listening to things that tend not to the service and honour of God, let him not desire that pleasure, nor desire to listen to them; and if there present itself the pleasure of looking at things that help him not Godward,<sup>3</sup> let him not desire the pleasure or look at these things; and if in conversation or in aught else soever such pleasure present itself, let him act likewise. And similarly with respect to all the senses, in so far as he can fairly avoid the pleasure in question; if he cannot, it suffices that, although these things may be present to his senses, he desire not to have this pleasure. And in this wise he will be able to mortify and void his senses of such pleasure, as though they were in darkness. If he takes care to do this, he will soon reap great profit.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. has 'care and affection' for 'desire.' [The word used for desire is *apetito*, which has been used in the past chapters for desires of sense (cf. p. 17, n. 5, above).]

<sup>2</sup> [St. John iv, 34.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'that lead him not Godward.'

5. For the mortifying and calming of the four natural passions, which are joy, hope, fear and grief, from the concord and pacification whereof come these and other blessings, the counsels here following are of the greatest help, and of great merit, and the source of great virtues.

6. Strive always to prefer, not that which is easiest, but that which is most difficult;

Not that which is most delectable, but that which is most unpleasing;

Not that which gives most pleasure, but rather that which gives least;<sup>1</sup>

Not that which is restful, but that which is wearisome;

Not that which is consolation, but rather that which is disconsolateness;

Not that which is greatest, but that which is least;

Not that which is loftiest and most precious, but that which is lowest and most despised;

Not that which is<sup>2</sup> a desire for anything, but that which is a desire for nothing;

Strive to go about seeking not the best of temporal things, but the worst.

Strive thus to desire to enter into complete detachment and emptiness and poverty, with respect to everything that is in the world, for Christ's sake.

7. And it is meet that the soul embrace these acts with all its heart and strive to subdue its will thereto. For, if it perform them with its heart, it will very quickly come to find in them great delight and consolation, and to act with order and discretion.

8. These things that have been said, if they be faithfully put into practice, are quite sufficient for entrance into the night of sense; but, for greater completeness, we shall describe another kind of exercise which teaches us to mortify the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which, says Saint John,<sup>3</sup> are the things that reign in the world, from which all the other desires proceed.<sup>4</sup>

9. First, let the soul strive to work in its own despite, and desire all

<sup>1</sup> B, c.p.: 'that which gives none.' E.p. omits 'rather.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'Not that which is to desire anything, etc.']

<sup>3</sup> [1 St. John ii, 16.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'which teaches us to mortify truly the desire for honour, whence originate many other [desires].'

to do so.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, let it strive to speak in its own despite and desire all to do so.<sup>2</sup> Third, let it strive to think humbly of itself, in its own despite, and desire all to do so.<sup>3</sup>

10. To conclude these counsels and rules, it will be fitting to set down here those lines which are written in the Ascent of the Mount,<sup>4</sup> which is the figure that is at the beginning of this book; the which lines are instructions for ascending to it, and thus reaching the summit of union. For, although it is true that that which is there spoken of is spiritual and interior, there is reference likewise to the spirit of imperfection according to sensual and exterior things, as may be seen by the two roads which are on either side of the path of perfection. It is in this way and according to this sense that we shall understand them here; that is to say, according to that which is sensual. Afterwards, in the second part of this night, they will be understood according to that which is spiritual.<sup>5</sup>

11. The lines are these:

In order to arrive at having<sup>6</sup> pleasure in everything,  
Desire to have pleasure in nothing.

In order to arrive at possessing everything,  
Desire to possess nothing.<sup>7</sup>

In order to arrive at being everything,  
Desire to be nothing.

In order to arrive at knowing everything,  
Desire to know nothing.

In order to arrive at that wherein thou hast no pleasure,  
Thou must go by a way wherein thou hast no pleasure.

In order to arrive at that which thou knowest not,  
Thou must go by a way that thou knowest not.

In order to arrive at that which thou possessest not,  
Thou must go by a way that thou possessest not.

In order to arrive at that which thou art not,  
Thou must go through that which thou art not.

<sup>1</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'others to do so.' A, B add: 'and this is against the concupiscence of the flesh.'

<sup>2</sup> A, B add: 'and this is against the concupiscence of the eyes.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B add: 'likewise against it; and this is against the pride of life.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B, C, D, e.p. have 'figure' for 'ascent.' The reference is to the diagram which is reproduced as the frontispiece to this volume. Cf. also p. xxiv, above.

<sup>5</sup> The Saint does not, however, allude to these lines again. The order followed below is that of Alc., which differs somewhat from that followed in the diagram.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'to have.'

<sup>7</sup> [This line, like ll. 6, 8 of the paragraph, reads more literally: 'Desire not to possess (be, know) anything in anything.' It is more emphatic than l. 2.]

## THE WAY NOT TO IMPEDE THE ALL.

12. When thy mind dwells upon anything,  
 Thou art ceasing to cast thyself upon the All.  
 For, in order to pass from the all to the All,  
 Thou hast to deny thyself<sup>1</sup> wholly<sup>2</sup> in all.  
 And, when thou comest to possess it wholly,  
 Thou must possess it without desiring anything.  
 For, if thou wilt have anything in having all,<sup>3</sup>  
 Thou hast not thy treasure purely in God.

13. In this detachment the spiritual soul finds its quiet and repose; for, since it covets nothing, nothing wearies it when it is lifted up, and nothing oppresses it when it is cast down, because it is in the centre of its humility; but, when it covets anything, at that very moment it becomes wearied.<sup>4</sup>

## CHAPTER XIV

*Wherein is expounded the second line of the stanza.<sup>5</sup>*

**Kindled in love with yearnings.**

Now that we have expounded the first line of this stanza, which treats of the night of sense, explaining what this night of sense is, and why it is called night; and now that we have likewise described the order and manner which are to be followed for a soul to enter therein actively, the next thing to be treated in due sequence is its properties and effects, which are wonderful, and are described in the next lines of the stanza aforementioned, upon which I will briefly touch for the sake of expounding the said lines,<sup>6</sup> as I promised in the Prologue;<sup>7</sup> and I will then pass on at once to the second book, treating of the other part of this night, which is the spiritual.

2. The soul, then, says that, 'kindled in love with yearnings,' it passed through this dark night of sense and came out thence to the

<sup>1</sup> Thus Alc., A, B, C, D. E.p. repeats: 'cast thyself.'

<sup>2</sup> [There is a repetition here which could only be indicated by translating 'all-ly.' So, too, in the next couplet.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'anything in all.']

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'of the above-mentioned stanza.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B add: 'and tormented.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'for . . . lines.'

<sup>7</sup> This confirms our point (p. 19, n. 4, above) that the Saint considers the Argument as part of the Prologue. A and B omit the rest of this paragraph.

union of the Beloved. For, in order to conquer all the desires and to deny itself the pleasures which it has in everything, and for which its love and affection are wont to enkindle the will that it may enjoy them, it would need to experience another and a greater enkindling by another and a better love, which is that of its Spouse; to the end that, having its pleasure set upon Him and deriving from Him its strength, it should have courage and constancy to deny itself all other things with ease. And, in order to conquer the strength of the desires of sense, it would need, not only to have love for its Spouse, but also to be enkindled by love and to have yearnings. For it comes to pass, and so it is, that with such yearnings of desire the sensual nature is moved and attracted toward sensual things, so that, if the spiritual part be not enkindled with other and greater yearnings for that which is spiritual, it will be unable to throw off the yoke of nature<sup>1</sup> or to enter this night of sense, neither will it have courage to remain in darkness as to all things, depriving itself of desire for them all.

3. And the nature and all the varieties of these yearnings of love which souls experience in the early stages of this road to union; and the diligent means and contrivances which they employ in order to leave their house, which is self-will, during the night of the mortification of their senses; and how easy, and even sweet and delectable,<sup>2</sup> these yearnings for the Spouse make all the trials and perils of this night to appear to them, this is not the place to describe, neither is such description possible; for it is better to know and meditate upon these things than to write of them. And so we shall pass on to expound the remaining lines in the next chapter.

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to conquer the natural yoke.'] E.p. has: 'the sensual and material yoke.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and delectable.'

## CHAPTER XV

*Wherein are expounded the remaining lines of the aforementioned stanza.<sup>1</sup>*

. . . oh, happy chance!—

**I went forth without being observed, My house being now at rest.**

**T**HESSE lines take as a metaphor the miserable estate of captivity, a man's deliverance from which, when none of the gaolers<sup>2</sup> hinder his release, he considers a 'happy chance.' For the soul, on account of<sup>3</sup> original sin, is truly as it were a captive in this mortal body, subject to the passions and desires of nature, from bondage and subjection to which it considers its having gone forth without being observed as a 'happy chance'—having gone forth, that is, without being impeded or engulfed<sup>4</sup> by any of them.

2. For to this end the soul profited by going forth upon a 'dark night'—that is, in the privation of all pleasures and mortification of all desires, after the manner whereof we have spoken. And by its 'house being now at rest' is meant the sensual part, which is the house of all the desires, and is now at rest because they have all been overcome and lulled to sleep. For until the desires are lulled to sleep through the mortification of the sensual nature, and until at last the sensual nature itself is at rest from them, so that they make not war upon the spirit, the soul goes not forth to true liberty and to the fruition of union with its Beloved.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A has no chapter-heading, considering this chapter as the termination of the last.

<sup>2</sup> A, B have 'gaolers'; Alc., C, D, 'prisoners.' The first reading is the more apt, though we should not say that the second is inadmissible.

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'after.']

<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'comprehended.']

<sup>5</sup> So end both the codices and c.p.

## BOOK THE SECOND

OF THE 'ASCENT OF MOUNT CARMEL'<sup>1</sup>

*Wherein is treated the proximate means of ascending to union with God, which is faith; and wherein therefore is described the second part of this night, which, as we said, belongs to the spirit, and is contained in the second stanza, which is as follows.*<sup>2</sup>

### STANZA THE SECOND

#### CHAPTER I<sup>3</sup>

**In darkness and secure, By the secret ladder, disguised—oh, happy chance!—**

**In darkness and in concealment, My house being now at rest.**

**I**N this second stanza the soul sings of the happy chance which it experienced in stripping the spirit of all spiritual imperfections and desires for the possession of spiritual things. This was a much greater happiness to it, by reason of the greater difficulty that there is in putting to rest this house of the spiritual part, and of being able to enter this interior darkness, which is spiritual detachment from all things, whether sensual or spiritual, and a leaning on pure faith<sup>4</sup> alone<sup>5</sup> and an ascent thereby to God. The soul here calls this a 'ladder,' and 'secret,' because all the rungs and parts of it<sup>6</sup> are secret and hidden from all sense and understanding. And thus the soul has remained in darkness as to all light<sup>7</sup> of sense and understanding, going forth beyond all

<sup>1</sup> So both Codices and c.p.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'Treats of the proximate means of attaining to union with God, which is faith, and of the second night of the spirit, contained in the second stanza.' It should be observed that the Saint calls this Second Book 'the second (spiritual) night' (e.g., on p. 74, below, and elsewhere).

<sup>3</sup> The chapter-headings vary considerably in the Codices and editions. B treats this chapter as an exposition and numbers from the next onward.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'on living faith.'

<sup>5</sup> In parenthesis c.p. adds: 'and of this I am ordinarily speaking because I am dealing with persons who journey to perfection.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'all the steps and articles that it has.']

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'all natural light.'

limits of nature and reason in order to ascend by this Divine ladder of faith, which attains<sup>1</sup> and penetrates even to the heights<sup>2</sup> of God. The soul says that it was travelling 'disguised,' because the garments and vesture<sup>3</sup> which it wears and its natural condition are changed into the Divine, as it ascends by faith. And it was because of this disguise that it was not recognized or impeded, either by time or by reason or by the devil; for none of these things can harm one that journeys in faith. And not only so, but the soul travels in such wise concealed and hidden and is so far from all the deceits of the devil that in truth it journeys (as it also says here) 'in darkness and in concealment'—that is to say, hidden from the devil, to whom the light of faith is more than darkness.

2. And thus the soul that journeys through this night, we may say, journeys in concealment and in hiding from the devil, as will be more clearly seen hereafter. Wherefore the soul says that it went forth 'in darkness and secure'; for one that has such happiness as to be able to journey through the darkness of faith, taking faith for his guide, like to one that is blind,<sup>4</sup> and leaving behind all natural imaginings and spiritual reasonings, journeys very securely, as we have said. And so the soul says furthermore that it went forth through this spiritual night, its 'house being now at rest'—that is to say, its spiritual and rational parts. When, therefore, the soul attains to union which is of God, its natural faculties are at rest, as are likewise its impulses and yearnings of the senses,<sup>5</sup> in its spiritual part. For this cause the soul says not here that it went forth with yearnings, as in the first night of sense. For, in order to journey in the night of sense, and to strip itself of that which is of sense, it needed yearnings of sense-love so that it might go forth perfectly; but, in order to put to rest the house of its spirit, it needs no more than denial<sup>6</sup> of all faculties and pleasures and desires of the spirit in pure faith. This attained, the soul is united with the Beloved in a union of simplicity and purity and love and similitude.

3. And it must be remembered that the first stanza, speaking of the sensual part, says that the soul went forth upon 'a dark night,' and

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'climbs': the verb (*escala*) is identical with the noun 'ladder' (*escala*).]

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to the depths.']

<sup>3</sup> Only Alc. has: 'vesture.'

<sup>4</sup> [The literal translation is shorter, viz. 'taking faith for a blind man's guide.']

<sup>5</sup> Alc. omits: 'of the senses.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'negation.'] This is the reading of Alc. 'Affirmation' is found in A, B, C, D, e.p. Though the two words are antithetical, they express the same underlying concept. [The affirmation, or establishment, of all the powers and desires of the spirit upon pure faith, so that they may be ruled by pure faith alone, is equivalent to the denial, or negation, of those powers and desires in so far as they are not ruled by pure faith.]

here, speaking of the spiritual part, it says that it went forth 'in darkness.' For the darkness of the spiritual part is by far the greater, even as darkness is a greater obscurity than that of night. For, however dark a night may be, something can always be seen, but in true darkness nothing can be seen; and thus in the night of sense there still remains some light, for the understanding and reason remain, and are not blinded. But this spiritual night, which is faith, deprives the soul of everything, both as to understanding and as to sense. And for this cause the soul in this night says that it was journeying 'in darkness and secure,' which it said not in the other. For, the less the soul works with its own ability, the more securely it journeys, because it journeys more in faith. And this will be expounded at length in the course of this second book, wherein it will be necessary for the devout reader to proceed attentively,<sup>1</sup> because there will be said herein things of great importance to the person that is truly spiritual.<sup>2</sup> And, although they are somewhat obscure, some of them will pave the way to others, so that I believe they will all be quite clearly understood.

## CHAPTER II

*Which begins to treat of the second part or cause of this night, which is faith. Proves by two arguments how it is darker than the first and than the third.*

WE now go on to treat of the second part of this night, which is faith; this is the wondrous means<sup>3</sup> which, as we said, leads to the goal, which is God, Who, as we said,<sup>4</sup> is also to the soul, naturally, the third cause or part of this night. For faith, which is the mean,<sup>5</sup> is compared with midnight. And thus we may say that it is darker for the soul either than the first part or, in a way, than the third; for the first part, which is that of sense, is compared to the beginning of night, or the time when sensible objects can no longer be seen, and thus it is not so far removed from light as is midnight. The third part, which is the period preceding the dawn, is quite close to the light of day, and it, too, therefore, is not so dark as midnight; for it is now close

<sup>1</sup> So e.p. The clause 'wherein . . . attentively' is omitted in A, B, C, D. Alc. reads: 'wherein I request the benevolent attention of the devout reader.'

<sup>2</sup> [Lit., 'to true spirit.'] A, B end the chapter here.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. has 'manner' for 'means.'

<sup>4</sup> [I, ii: p. 19, above.]

<sup>5</sup> [Cf. p. 19, n. 11, above.]

to the enlightenment and illumination of the light<sup>1</sup> of day, which is compared with God. For, although it is true, if we speak after a natural manner, that God is as dark a night to the soul as is faith, still, when these three parts of the night are over, which are naturally night to the soul, God begins to illumine the soul by supernatural means with the ray of His Divine light;<sup>2</sup> which is the beginning of the perfect union that follows, when the third night is past, and it can thus be said to be less dark.<sup>3</sup>

2. It is likewise darker than the first night, for this belongs to the lower part of man, which is the sensual part, and, consequently, the more exterior; and this second part, which is of faith, belongs to the higher part of man, which is the rational part, and, in consequence, more interior and more obscure, since it deprives it of the light of reason, or, to speak more clearly, blinds it;<sup>4</sup> and thus it is aptly compared to midnight, which is the depth of night and the darkest part thereof.

3. We have now to prove how this second part, which is faith, is night to the spirit, even as the first part is night to sense. And we shall then also describe the things that are contrary to it, and how the soul must prepare itself actively to enter it. For, concerning the passive part, which is that which God works in it, when He brings it into that night, we shall speak in its place, which I intend shall be the third book.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So Alc. A, B, e.p.: 'of the brightness.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds these words, which occur in none of the codices: 'and in a loftier, higher and more experimental manner.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'to be dark.'

<sup>4</sup> This was another of the propositions which were cited by those who denounced the writings of St. John of the Cross to the Holy Office. It is interpretable, nevertheless, in a sense that is perfectly true and completely in conformity with Catholic doctrine. The Saint does not, in these words, affirm that faith destroys nature or quenches the light of human reason (St. Thomas, *Summa*, Pt. I, q. 1, a. 8, *et alibi*); what he endeavours to show is that the coming of knowledge through faith excludes a simultaneous coming of natural knowledge through reason. It is only in this way that, in the act of faith, the soul is deprived of the light of reason, and left, as it were, in blindness, so that it may be raised to another nobler and sublimer kind of knowledge, which, far from destroying reason, gives it dignity and perfection. Philosophy teaches that the proper and connatural object of the understanding, in this life, is things visible, material and corporeal. By his nature, man inclines to knowledge of this kind, but cannot lay claim to such knowledge as regards the things which belong to faith. For, to quote a famous verse of Scripture: *Fides est sperandarum substantiarum rerum, argumentum non apparentium* (Hebrews xi, 1). This line of thought is not confined to St. John of the Cross, but is followed by all the mystics and is completely in agreement with theological doctrine. Cf. *Respuesta* [Reply] of P. Basilio Ponce de León and *Dilucidatio*, Pt. II, Chap. ii, and also the following chapter in this present book.

<sup>5</sup> Here end Alc. and e.p. A, B add: 'as we have already spoken and promised to speak of the passive [part] of the first [night] in the second [book].' The subject in question is actually treated in the *Dark Night of the Soul*.

## CHAPTER III

*How faith is dark night to the soul. This is proved with arguments and quotations and figures from Scripture.*<sup>1</sup>

FAITH, say the theologians, is a habit of the soul, certain and obscure. And the reason for its being an obscure habit is that it makes us believe truths revealed by God Himself, which transcend all natural light, and exceed all human understanding, beyond all proportion.<sup>2</sup> Hence it follows that, for the soul, this excessive light of faith which is given to it is thick darkness, for it overwhelms greater things and does away with smaller things, even as the light of the sun overwhelms all other lights whatsoever, so that when it shines and disables our visual faculty they appear not to be lights at all. So that it blinds it and deprives it of the sight that has been given to it, inasmuch as its light is great beyond all proportion and transcends the faculty of vision. Even so the light of faith, by its excessive greatness, oppresses and disables that of the understanding;<sup>3</sup> for the latter, of its own power, extends only to natural knowledge, although it has a faculty<sup>4</sup> for the supernatural, whenever Our Lord is pleased to give it supernatural activity.

2. Wherefore a man can know nothing by himself, save after a natural manner,<sup>5</sup> which is only that which he attains by means of the senses. For this cause he must have the phantasms and the forms<sup>6</sup> of objects present in themselves and in their likenesses;<sup>7</sup> otherwise it

<sup>1</sup> A, B omit this sentence.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'beyond all proportion.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'by its excessive greatness and by the way wherein God communicates it, transcends that of our understanding.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'an obediencial faculty' [*potencia obediencial*]: this phrase is borrowed from the Schoolmen. Among the various divisions of the faculty are two, natural and obediencial. The first is that which is directed towards an act within the sphere of nature, such as the cooling action of water and the heating action of fire; the second is directed towards an act which exceeds these powers, brought about by God, Who is outside the laws of nature and can therefore work outside the natural domain. This obediencial faculty (called also 'receptive' or 'passive') frequently figures in mystical theology, since it is this that disposes the faculties of the soul for the supernatural reception of the gifts of grace, all of which exceed natural capacity.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'a natural manner which has its beginning in the senses.' Here the Saint expounds a principle of scholastic philosophy summarized in the axiom: *Nihil est in intellectu quin prius non fuerit in sensu*. This principle, like many other great philosophical questions, has continually been debated. St. John of the Cross will be found as a rule to follow the philosophy most favoured by the Church and is always rigidly orthodox.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'the phantasms and senses.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. uses *semejanças*, the abstract noun; the Codices have *semejantes* [a word which can be either abstract or concrete, in the latter case with the sense of 'fellow-creatures'].

cannot be, for, as philosophers say: *Ab objecto et potentia paritur notitia*. That is: From the object that is present and from the faculty, knowledge is born in the soul. Wherefore, if one should speak to a man of things which he has never been able to understand, and whose likeness he has never seen, he would have no more illumination from them whatever than if naught had been said of them to him. I take an example. If one should say to a man that on a certain island there is an animal which he has never seen, and give him no idea of the likeness of that animal, that he may compare it with others that he has seen, he will have no more knowledge of it, or idea of its form, than he had before, however much is being said to him about it. And this will be better understood by another and a more apt example. If one should describe to a man that was born blind, and has never seen any colour, what is meant by a white colour or by a yellow, he would understand it but indifferently, however fully one might describe it to him; for, as he has never seen such colours or anything like them by which he may judge them, only their names would remain with him; for these he would be able to comprehend through the ear, but not their forms or figures, since he has never seen them.

3. Even so<sup>1</sup> is faith with respect to the soul; it tells us of things which we have never seen or understood, nor have we seen or understood aught that resembles them, since there is naught that resembles them at all.<sup>2</sup> And thus we have no light of natural knowledge concerning them, since that which we are told of them bears no relation to any sense of ours; we know it by the ear alone, believing that which we are taught, bringing our natural light into subjection and treating it as if it were not.<sup>3</sup> For, as Saint Paul says, *Fides ex auditu*.<sup>4</sup> As though he were to say: Faith is not knowledge which enters by any of the senses, but is only the consent given by the soul to that which enters<sup>5</sup> through the ear.

4. And faith far transcends even that which is indicated by the examples given above. For not only does it give no information and knowledge,<sup>6</sup> but, as we have said, it deprives us of all other information and knowledge, and blinds us to them, so that they cannot judge it well.<sup>7</sup> For other knowledge can be acquired by the light of the

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds in parenthesis: 'though the equivalence is not exact.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'aught that resembles them, which might bring us to a knowledge of them without revelation.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'subjecting and blinding our natural light.']

<sup>4</sup> Romans x, 17.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'but is superior light which enters.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'no evidence or knowledge.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'but, as we have said, it surpasses and transcends any other knowledge and science, so that we may only judge of it in perfect contemplation.'

understanding; but the knowledge that is of faith is acquired without the illumination of the understanding, which is rejected for faith; and in its own light, if that light be not darkened, it is lost. Wherefore Isaias said: *Si non credideritis, non intelligetis*.<sup>1</sup> That is: If ye believe not, ye shall not understand. It is clear, then, that faith is dark night for the soul, and it is in this way that it gives it light; and the more the soul is darkened, the greater is the light that comes to it. For it is by blinding that it gives light, according to this saying of Isaias. For if ye believe not, ye shall not (he says) have light.<sup>2</sup> And thus faith was foreshadowed by that cloud which divided the children of Israel and the Egyptians when the former were about to enter the Red Sea, whereof Scripture says: *Erat nubes tenebrosa, et illuminans noctem*.<sup>3</sup> This is to say that that cloud was full of darkness and gave light to the night.

5. A wondrous thing it is that, though it was dark, it should give light to the night. This was said to show that faith, which is a black and dark cloud to the soul (and likewise is night, since in the presence of faith the soul is deprived of its natural light and is blinded), can with its darkness give light and illumination to the darkness of the soul, for it was fitting that the disciple should thus be like the master. For man, who is in darkness, could not fittingly be enlightened save by other darkness, even as David teaches us, saying: *Dies diei eructat verbum et nox nocti indicat scientiam*.<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: Day unto day uttereth and aboundeth in speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. Which, to speak more clearly, signifies: The day, which is God in bliss, where it is day to the blessed angels and souls who are now day, communicates and reveals<sup>5</sup> to them the Word, which is His Son, that they may know Him and enjoy Him. And the night, which is faith in the Church Militant, where it is still night, shows knowledge to the Church, and consequently to every soul, which knowledge is night to it, since it is without<sup>6</sup> clear beatific wisdom; and, in the presence of faith, it is blind as to its natural light.

6. So that which is to be inferred from this is that faith, because it is dark night, gives light to the soul, which is in darkness, that there

<sup>1</sup> Isaias vii, 9. So Alc. The passage seems to be taken from the Septuagint. [The Vulgate has *non permanebitis*.]

<sup>2</sup> [Lit., 'If ye believe not, that is, ye shall not have light.'] E.p. evidently found this not clear, for it expands the sentence thus: For if ye believe not—that is, if ye blind not yourselves—ye shall not understand—that is, ye shall not have light and knowledge both lofty and supernatural.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus xiv, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xviii, 3 [A.V., xix, 2].

<sup>5</sup> Thus e.p. modifies the reading of the codices [followed by P. Silverio]: 'and pronounces.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'since it does not yet enjoy.'

may come to be fulfilled<sup>1</sup> that which David likewise says to this purpose, in these words: *Et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: The night will be my illumination in my delights. Which is as much as to say: In the delights of my pure contemplation and union with God, the night of faith shall be my guide. Wherein he gives it clearly to be understood<sup>3</sup> that the soul must be in darkness in order to have light for this road.<sup>4</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

*Treats in general of how the soul likewise must be in darkness, in so far as this rests with itself, to the end that it may be effectively guided by faith to the highest contemplation.*

IT is now, I think, becoming clear how faith is dark night to the soul, and how the soul likewise must be dark, or in darkness as to its own light,<sup>5</sup> so that it may allow itself to be guided by faith to this high goal of union. But, in order that the soul may be able to do this, it will now be well to continue describing, in somewhat greater detail, this darkness which it must have, in order that it may enter into this abyss of faith. And thus in this chapter I shall speak of it in a general way; and hereafter, with the Divine favour, I shall continue to describe more minutely the way in which the soul is to conduct itself that it may neither stray therein nor impede this guide.

2. I say, then, that the soul, in order to be effectively guided to this state by faith, must not only be in darkness with respect to that part that concerns the creatures and temporal things, which is the sensual and the lower part (whereof we have already treated), but that likewise it must be blinded and darkened according to the part which has respect to God and to spiritual things, which is the rational and higher part,<sup>6</sup> whereof we are now treating. For, in order that one may attain supernatural transformation, it is clear that he must be plunged into darkness and carried far away from all contained in his nature<sup>7</sup> that is sensual and rational. For the word supernatural means that which soars

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'that there may come and may be fulfilled.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxxxviii, 11 [A.V., cxxxix, 11].

<sup>3</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'Giving it to be understood.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'in order to have light and to be able to walk on this road.'

<sup>5</sup> A, e.p.: 'its own natural light.'

<sup>6</sup> Alc. alone reads: 'the reason and the higher part.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'all belonging to his nature.'

above the natural; the natural self, therefore, remains beneath it. For, although this transformation and union is something that cannot be comprehended by human ability and sense, the soul must completely and voluntarily void itself of all that can enter into it,<sup>1</sup> whether from above or from below—I mean according to the affection and will—so far as this rests with itself. For who shall prevent God from doing that which He will in the soul that is resigned, annihilated and detached? But the soul must be voided of all such things as can enter<sup>2</sup> its capacity, so that,<sup>3</sup> however many supernatural experiences it may have, it will ever remain as it were detached from them and in darkness. It must be like to a blind man, leaning upon dark faith, taking it for guide and light, and leaning upon none of the things that he understands, experiences, feels and imagines. For all these are darkness, which will cause him to stray; and faith is above all that he understands and experiences and feels and imagines. And, if he be not blinded as to this, and remain not in total darkness,<sup>4</sup> he attains not to that which is greater—namely, that which is taught by faith.

3. A blind man, if he be not quite blind, refuses to be led by a guide; and, since he sees a little, he thinks it better to go in whatever happens to be the direction which he can distinguish, because he sees none better; and thus he can lead astray a guide who sees more than he, for after all it is for him to say where he shall go rather than for the guide.<sup>5</sup> In the same way a soul may lean upon any knowledge of its own, or any feeling or experience of God, yet, however great this may be, it is very little and far different from what God is; and, in going along this road, a soul is easily led astray, or brought to a standstill, because it will not remain in faith like one that is blind, and faith is its true guide.

4. It is this that was meant by Saint Paul when he said: *Accedentem ad Deum oportet credere quod est.*<sup>6</sup> Which signifies: He that would journey towards union with God must needs believe in His Being. As though he had said: He that would attain to being joined in a union with God must not walk by understanding, neither lean upon experience or feeling or imagination, but he must believe in His Being,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So Alc. The other authorities have: 'that can be contained in it.' [The difference is slight: *cuer* for *caber*.]

<sup>2</sup> The variant of the preceding note is repeated here.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'But the soul must be voided of all things, so that.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'with respect to it.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: '... lead astray his guide, because he acts as if he saw and it is for him to say where he shall go rather than for the guide.'

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews xi, 6.

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'but he must believe in the perfection of the Divine Being.'

which is not perceptible to the understanding, neither to the desire nor to the imagination nor to any other sense, neither can it be known<sup>1</sup> in this life at all. Yea, in this life, the highest thing that can be felt and experienced concerning God is infinitely remote from God and from the pure possession of Him. Isaias and Saint Paul say: *Nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quæ præparavit Deus iis, qui diligunt illum.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: That which God hath prepared for them that love Him neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart or thought of man. So, however much the soul aspires to be perfectly united through grace in this life with that to which it will be united through glory in the next (which, as Saint Paul here says, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man in the flesh<sup>3</sup>), it is clear that, in order perfectly to attain to union in this life through grace and through love, a soul must be in darkness with respect to all that can enter through the eye, and to all that can be received through the ear, and can be imagined with the fancy, and understood with the heart, which here signifies the soul. And thus a soul is greatly impeded from reaching this high estate of union with God when it clings to any understanding or feeling or imagination or appearance or will or manner of its own, or to any other act or to anything of its own, and cannot detach and strip itself of all these. For, as we say, the goal which it seeks lies beyond all this, yea, beyond even the highest thing that can be known or experienced; and thus a soul must pass beyond everything to unknowing.

5. Wherefore, upon this road, to enter upon the road is to leave the road; or, to express it better, it is to pass on to the goal and to leave one's own way,<sup>4</sup> and to enter upon that which<sup>5</sup> has no way, which is God. For the soul that attains to this state has no longer any ways or methods, still less is it attached to ways and methods, or is capable of being attached to them. I mean ways of understanding, or of perception, or of feeling. Nevertheless it has within itself all ways, after the way of one that possesses nothing, yet possesses all things.<sup>6</sup> For, if it have courage to pass beyond its natural limitations, both interiorly and exteriorly, it enters within the limits of the supernatural,<sup>7</sup> which has no way, yet in substance<sup>8</sup> has all ways. Hence for the soul to arrive at these

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'known as it is.'

<sup>2</sup> Isaias lxiv, 4; 1 Corinthians ii, 9.

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'heart of the flesh.'

<sup>4</sup> [The word translated 'way' is *modo*, which, in the language of scholastic philosophy, would rather be translated 'mode.']

<sup>5</sup> A, B: 'to enter upon the goal which . . .'

<sup>6</sup> [2 Corinthians vi, 10.]

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'it enters, without any limit, into the supernatural.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. has 'eminently' for 'in substance.'

limits is for it to leave these limits, in each case going forth out of itself a great way from this lowly state to that which is high above all others.

6. Wherefore, passing beyond all that can be known and understood, both spiritually and naturally,<sup>1</sup> the soul will desire with all desire to come to that which in this life cannot be known, neither can enter into its heart. And, leaving behind all that it experiences and feels, both temporally and spiritually,<sup>2</sup> and all that it is able to experience and feel in this life, it will desire with all desire to come to that which surpasses all feeling and experience. And, in order to be free and void to that end, it must in no wise lay hold upon that which it receives, either spiritually or sensually, within itself<sup>3</sup> (as we shall explain presently, when we treat this in detail), considering it all to be of much less account. For the more emphasis the soul lays upon what it understands, experiences and imagines, and the more it esteems this, whether it be spiritual or no, the more it loses of the supreme good, and the more it is hindered from attaining thereto. And the less it thinks of what it may have, however much this be, in comparison with the highest good, the more it dwells upon that good and esteems it, and, consequently, the more nearly it approaches it. And in this wise the soul approaches a great way towards union, in darkness, by means of faith, which is likewise dark, and in this wise faith wondrously illumines it. It is certain that, if the soul should desire to see, it would be in darkness much more quickly,<sup>4</sup> with respect to God, than would one who opens his eyes to look upon the great brightness of the sun.

7. Wherefore, by blinding itself in its faculties upon this road, the soul will see the light, even as the Saviour says in the Gospel, in this wise: *In iudicium veni in hunc mundum: ut qui non vident, videant, et qui vident, cæci fiant.*<sup>5</sup> That is: I am come into this world for judgment; that they which see not may see, and that they which see may become blind. This, as it will be supposed, is to be understood of this spiritual road, where the soul that is in darkness,<sup>6</sup> and is blinded as regards all its natural and proper lights, will see supernaturally; and the soul that would depend upon any light of its own will become the blinder and will halt upon the road to union.

8. And, that we may proceed with less confusion, I think it will be

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'and temporally.'

<sup>2</sup> Thus Alc. A, B have 'spiritually' only; e.p.: 'both spiritually and sensually.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'either spiritually or sensually, in its soul.']

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'it would be in much greater darkness.'

<sup>5</sup> St. John ix, 39.

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits the quotation and its exposition, abbreviating thus: 'the soul will see the light, so that the soul that is in darkness . . .'

necessary to describe, in the following chapter, the nature of this that we call union of the soul with God; for, when this is understood, that which we shall say hereafter will become much clearer. And so I think the treatment of this union comes well at this point, as in its proper place. For, although the thread of that which we are expounding is interrupted thereby, this is not done without a reason, since it serves to illustrate in this place the very thing that is being described.<sup>1</sup> The chapter which follows, then, will be a parenthetical one, placed, as it were, between the two terms of an enthymeme,<sup>2</sup> since we shall afterwards have to treat in detail of the three faculties of the soul, with respect to the three theological virtues, in relation to this second night.

## CHAPTER V

*Wherein is described what is meant by union of the soul with God. A comparison is given.*<sup>3</sup>

FROM what has been said above it becomes clear to some extent what we mean by union of the soul with God; what we now say about it, therefore, will be the better understood. It is not my intention here to treat of the divisions of this union, nor of its

<sup>1</sup> A, B end the chapter here.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits this phrase.

<sup>3</sup> As the Saint has explained above, this is a parenthetical chapter necessary to an understanding of the following chapters on the active purification of the three faculties of the soul; for, in order to make an intelligent use of the means to an end, it is important to know what that end is. St. John of the Cross begins by setting aside the numerous divisions under which the mystics speak of union with God and deals only with that which most usually concerns the soul, namely union which is active, and acquired by our own efforts, together with the habitual aid of grace. This is the kind of union which is most suitably described in this treatise, which deals with the intense activity of the soul as regards the purgation of the senses and faculties as a necessary means for the loving transformation of the soul in God—the end and goal of all the Saint's writings. In order to forestall any grossly erroneous pantheistic interpretations, we point out, with the author of the *Médula Mystica* (Trat. V, Chap. i, No. 2), that by union the Saint understands 'a linking and conjoining of two things which, though united, are still different, each, as St. Thomas teaches (Pt. III, q. 2, a. 1), keeping its own nature, for otherwise there would not be union but identity. Union of the soul with God, therefore, will be a linking and conjoining of the soul with God and of God with the soul, for the one cannot be united with the other if the other be not united with the one, so that the soul is still the soul and God is still God. But just as, when two things are united, the one which has the most power, virtue and activity communicates its properties to the other, just so, since God has greater strength, virtue and activity than the soul, He communicates His properties to it and makes it, as it were, deific, and leaves it, as it were, divinized, to a greater or a lesser degree, corresponding to the greater or the lesser degree of union between the two.' This conception, which is a basic one in Christian mysticism, is that of St. John of the Cross. Had all his commentators understood that fact, some of them would have been saved from making ridiculous comparisons of him with Gnostics,

parts,<sup>1</sup> for I should never end if I were to begin now to explain what is the nature of union of the understanding, and what is that of union according to the will, and likewise according to the memory; and likewise what is transitory and what permanent in the union of the said faculties; and then what is meant by total union, transitory and permanent, with regard to the said faculties all together. All this we shall treat gradually in our discourse—speaking first of one and then of another. But here this is not to the point in order to describe what we have to say concerning them; it will be explained<sup>2</sup> much more fittingly in its place, when we shall again be treating the same matter, and shall have a striking illustration to add to the present explanation, so that everything will then be considered and explained and we shall judge of it better.

2. Here I treat only of this permanent and total union according to the substance of the soul and its faculties with respect to the obscure habit of union: for with respect to the act, we shall explain later, with the Divine favour, how there can be no permanent union in the faculties, in this life, but a transitory union only.

3. In order, then, to understand what is meant by this union whereof we are treating, it must be known that God dwells and is present substantially in every soul, even in that of the greatest sinner in the world. And this kind of union<sup>3</sup> is ever wrought between God and all the creatures, for in it He is preserving their being: if union of this kind were to fail them, they would at once become annihilated and would cease to be. And so, when we speak of union of the soul with God, we speak not of this substantial union which is continually being wrought,<sup>4</sup> but of the union and transformation of the soul with God,<sup>5</sup> which is

Illuminists or even the Eastern seekers after Nirvana. Actually, this Saint and Doctor of the Church applies the tenets of Catholic theology to the union of the soul with God, presenting them in a condensed and vigorous form and keeping also to strict psychological truth, as in general do the other Spanish mystics. This is one of his greatest merits. In this chapter he is speaking, not of essential union, which has nothing to do with his subject, but (presupposing the union worked through sanctifying grace received in the substance of the soul, which is the source of the infused virtues, such as faith, hope and charity, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit) of active actual union, after which we can and should strive, so that we may will what God wills and abhor what He abhors. Though not the only kind of union, it is this which chiefly concerns the soul; and, when once this is attained, God readily grants all other mystical gifts. Cf. St. Teresa's *Interior Castle*, V, iii [C.W.S.T.J., II, 259-60].

<sup>1</sup> Only Alc., A, B have: 'nor of its parts.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'And it is not now our intention to explain in detail what is the union of the understanding, what is that of the will, and what likewise is that of the memory; and what is transitory and what permanent in the said faculties, for this we shall treat hereafter and it will be explained . . .'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'or presence (which we may describe as being in the order of nature).'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'we speak not of this presence of God which ever exists in all the creatures.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. adds: 'through love.'

not being wrought continually, but only when there is produced that likeness that comes from love; we shall therefore term this the union of likeness, even as that other union is called substantial or essential. The former is natural; the latter supernatural. And the latter comes to pass when the two wills—namely that of the soul and that of God—are conformed together in one, and there is naught in the one that is repugnant to the other. And thus, when the soul rids itself totally of that which is repugnant to the Divine will and conforms not with it, it is transformed in God through love.

4. This is to be understood of that which is repugnant, not only in action, but likewise in habit, so that not only must the voluntary acts of imperfection cease, but the habits of any such imperfections must be annihilated.<sup>1</sup> And since no creature whatsoever, and none of its actions or abilities, can conform or can attain to that which is God, therefore must the soul be stripped of all things created, and of its own actions and abilities—namely, of its understanding, perception and feeling—so that, when all that is unlike God and unconformed to Him is cast out, the soul may receive the likeness of God; and nothing will then remain in it that is not the will of God and it will thus be transformed in God. Wherefore, although it is true that, as we have said, God is ever in the soul, giving it, and through His presence conserving within it, its natural being, yet He does not always communicate supernatural being to it. For this is communicated only by love and grace, which not all souls possess; and all those that possess it have it not in the same degree; for some have attained more degrees of love and others fewer. Wherefore God communicates Himself most to that soul that has progressed farthest in love; namely, that has its will in closest conformity with the will of God. And the soul that has attained complete conformity and likeness of will is totally united and transformed in God supernaturally. Wherefore, as has already been explained, the more completely a soul is wrapped up in<sup>2</sup> the creatures and in its own abilities, by habit and affection, the less preparation it has for such union; for it gives not God a complete opportunity to transform it supernaturally. The soul, then, needs only to strip itself of these natural dissimilarities and contrarities, so that God, Who is communicating Himself naturally to it, according to the course of nature, may communicate Himself to it supernaturally, by means of grace.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'but also the habits.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'is clothed with.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p. reads: 'The soul, then, needs to strip itself of these natural dissimilarities and contrarities, so that God, Who is naturally present in it by means of essence, may communicate Himself supernaturally to it by means of grace, in the transformation of union.'

5. And it is this that Saint John desired to explain when he said: *Qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo nati sunt.*<sup>1</sup> As though he had said: He gave power to be sons of God—that is, to be transformed in God—only to those who are born, not of blood—that is, not of natural constitution and temperament—neither of the will of the flesh—that is, of the free will of natural capacity and ability—still less of the will of man—wherein is included every way and manner of judging and comprehending with the understanding. He gave power to none of these to become sons of God, but only to those that are born of God—that is, to those who, being born again through grace, and dying first of all to everything that is of the old man, are raised above themselves to the supernatural, and receive from God this rebirth and adoption, which transcends all that can be imagined. For, as Saint John himself says elsewhere: *Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua, et Spiritu Sancto, non potest videre regnum Dei.*<sup>2</sup> This signifies: He that is not born again in the Holy Spirit will not be able to see this kingdom of God, which is the state of perfection; and to be born again in the Holy Spirit<sup>3</sup> in this life<sup>4</sup> is to have a soul most like to God in purity, having in itself no admixture of imperfection, so that pure transformation can be wrought in it through participation of union, albeit not essentially.

6. In order that both these things may be the better understood, let us make a comparison. A ray of sunlight is striking a window. If the window is in any way stained or misty, the sun's ray will be unable to illumine it and transform it into its own light, totally, as it would if it were clean of all these things, and pure; but it will illumine it to a lesser degree, in proportion as it is less free from those mists and stains; and will do so to a greater degree, in proportion as it is cleaner from them,<sup>5</sup> and this will not be because of the sun's ray, but because of itself; so much so that, if it be wholly pure and clean, the ray of sunlight will transform it and illumine it in such wise that it will itself seem to be a ray and will give the same light as the ray. Although in reality the window has a nature distinct from that of the ray itself, however much it may resemble it, yet we may say that that window is a ray of the sun or is light by participation. And the soul is like this window, whereupon is ever beating (or, to express it better, wherein is ever

<sup>1</sup> St. John i, 13.

<sup>2</sup> St. John iii, 5.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits the whole of the first part of this paragraph, beginning thus: 'For the estate of perfection and re-birth in the Holy Spirit . . .'

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'in this life perfectly.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and will . . . from them.'

dwelling) this Divine light of the Being of God according to nature, which we have described.

7. In thus allowing God to work in it, the soul (having rid itself of every mist and stain of the creatures, which consists in having its will perfectly united with that of God, for to love is to labour to detach and strip itself for God's sake of all that is not God) is at once illumined and transformed in God, and God communicates to it His supernatural Being, in such wise that it appears to be God Himself, and has all that God Himself has. And this union comes to pass when God grants the soul this supernatural favour,<sup>1</sup> that all the things of God and the soul are one in participant transformation; and the soul seems to be God rather than a soul, and is indeed God by participation; although it is true that its natural being, though thus transformed, is as distinct from the Being of God as it was before, even as the window has likewise a nature distinct from that of the ray, though the ray gives it brightness.

8. This makes it clearer that the preparation of the soul for this union, as we said, is not that it should understand or perceive or feel or imagine anything, concerning either God or aught else, but that it should have purity and love—that is, perfect resignation and detachment from everything for God's sake alone;<sup>2</sup> and, as there can be no perfect transformation if there be not perfect purity, and as the enlightenment, illumination and union of the soul with God will be according to the proportion of its purity, in greater or in less degree; yet the soul will not be perfect, as I say, if it be not wholly and perfectly<sup>3</sup> bright and clean.

9. This will likewise be understood by the following comparison. A picture is truly perfect, with many and most sublime beauties and delicate and subtle illuminations, and some of its beauties are so fine and subtle<sup>4</sup> that they cannot be completely realized, because of their delicacy and excellence. Fewer beauties and less delicacy will be seen in this picture by one whose vision is less clear and refined; and he whose vision is somewhat more refined will be able to see in it more beauties and perfections; and, if another person has a vision still more refined, he will see still more perfection;<sup>5</sup> and, finally, he who has the clearest and purest faculties will see<sup>6</sup> the most beauties and perfections

<sup>1</sup> A, B, C, e.p. have: 'this sovereign favour.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. modifies: 'that the preparation for this union is purity and love—that is, perfect resignation and total detachment, for God's sake alone.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'wholly perfect and . . .']

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits 'and subtle.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'and he whose vision is more refined will be able to see greater beauties; and, if another person has a vision still more refined, he will be able to see still greater perfection.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'will be able to see.'

of all; for there is so much to see in the picture that, however far one may attain, there will ever remain higher degrees of attainment.

10. After the same manner we may describe the condition of the soul with relation to God in this enlightenment or transformation. For, although it is true that a soul, according to its greater or lesser capacity, may have attained to union, yet not all do so in an equal degree, for this depends upon what the Lord is pleased to grant to each one. It is in this way that souls see God in Heaven; some more, some less<sup>1</sup>; but all see Him, and all are content,<sup>2</sup> for their capacity is satisfied.

11. Wherefore, although in this life here below we find certain souls enjoying equal peace and tranquillity in the state of perfection, and each one of them satisfied, yet some of them may be many degrees higher than others. All, however, will be equally satisfied, because the capacity of each one is satisfied.<sup>3</sup> But the soul that attains not to such a measure of purity as is in conformity with its capacity<sup>4</sup> never attains true peace and satisfaction, since it has not attained to the possession of that detachment and emptiness in its faculties which is required for simple union.<sup>5</sup>

## CHAPTER VI

*Wherein is described how it is the three theological virtues that perfect the three faculties of the soul, and how the said virtues produce emptiness and darkness within them.*<sup>6</sup>

HAVING now to endeavour to show how<sup>7</sup> the three faculties of the soul—understanding, memory and will—are brought into this spiritual night, which is the means to Divine union, it is necessary first of all to explain in this chapter how the three theological virtues—faith, hope and charity—which have respect to the three faculties aforesaid as their proper supernatural objects, and<sup>8</sup> by means

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'some more perfectly, some less so.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'content and satisfied.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'equally satisfied, each one according to his preparation and the knowledge that he has of God.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'to such a measure of purity as seems to be demanded by the enlightenment and vocation [that have been granted it] from God.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B: 'union with God.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. adds: 'To this purpose are quoted two passages, one from Saint Luke and the other from Isaias.'

<sup>7</sup> [Lit., 'to lead . . . into,' as at the beginning of § 6, below.]

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'which have . . . objects, and.'

whereof the soul is united with God according to its faculties, produce the same emptiness and darkness, each one in its own faculty. Faith, in the understanding; hope, in the memory; and charity, in the will. And afterwards we shall go on to describe how the understanding is perfected in the darkness of faith; and the memory in the emptiness of hope; and likewise how the will must be buried by<sup>1</sup> withdrawing and detaching every affection so that the soul may journey to God. This done, it will be clearly seen how necessary it is for the soul, if it is to walk securely on this spiritual road, to travel through this dark night, leaning upon these three virtues, which empty it of all things and make it dark with respect to them. For, as we have said, the soul is not united with God in this life through understanding, nor through enjoyment, nor through the imagination, nor through any sense whatsoever; but only through faith, according to the understanding; and through hope, according to the memory; and through love, according to the will.<sup>2</sup>

2. These three virtues, as we have said, all cause emptiness in the faculties: faith, in the understanding, causes an emptiness and darkness with respect to understanding; hope, in the memory, causes emptiness of all possessions; and charity causes emptiness in the will and detachment from all affection and from rejoicing in all that is not God. For, as we see, faith tells us what cannot be understood with the understanding.<sup>3</sup> Wherefore Saint Paul spoke of it *ad Hebræos* after this manner: *Fides est sperandarum substantia rerum, argumentum non apparentium*.<sup>4</sup> This we interpret as meaning that faith is the substance of things hoped for; and, although the understanding may be firmly and certainly consenting to them, they are not things that are revealed to the understanding, since, if they were revealed to it, there would be no faith. So faith, although it brings certainty to the understanding, brings it not clearness, but obscurity.

3. Then, as to hope, there is no doubt but that it renders the memory empty and dark with respect both to things below and to things above. For hope always relates to that which is not possessed; for, if it were possessed, there would be no more hope. Wherefore Saint Paul says

<sup>1</sup> So Alc., B [*enterrar*]. A, e.p. have [*entrar*, which changes the reading to] 'must enter into the withdrawal and detachment of.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'and through hope, which may be attributed to the memory (although it be in the will) with respect to the emptiness and forgetfulness of every other temporal and fleeting thing which it causes, the soul keeping itself entirely for the supreme good for which it hopes; and through love, according to the will.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'according to its natural light and reason.'

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews xi, 1.

*ad Romanos: Spes, quæ videtur, non est spes: nam quod videt quis, quid sperat?*<sup>1</sup> That is to say: Hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth—that is, what a man possesseth—how doth he hope for it?<sup>2</sup> This virtue, then, also produces emptiness, for it has to do with that which is not possessed and not with that which is possessed.

4. Similarity, charity causes emptiness in the will with respect to all things, since it obliges us to love God above them all; which cannot be unless we withdraw our affection from them all in order to set it wholly upon God. Wherefore Christ<sup>3</sup> says, through Saint Luke: *Qui non renuntiat omnibus quæ possidet, non potest meus esse discipulus.*<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: He that renounces not all that he possesses with the will cannot be My disciple. And thus all these three virtues set the soul in obscurity and emptiness with respect to all things.

5. And here we must consider that parable which our Redeemer related in the eleventh chapter of Saint Luke, wherein He said that a friend had to go out at midnight in order to ask his friend for three loaves;<sup>5</sup> the which loaves signify these three virtues. And he said that he asked for them at midnight in order to signify that the soul that is in darkness as to all things must acquire these three virtues<sup>6</sup> according to its faculties and must perfect itself in them in this night. In the sixth chapter of Isaias we read that the two seraphim whom this Prophet saw on either side of God had each six wings; with two they covered their feet, which signified the blinding and quenching of the affections of the will with respect to all things for the sake of God; and with two they covered their face, which signified the darkness of the understanding in the presence of God; and with the other two they flew.<sup>7</sup> This is to signify the flight of hope to the things that are not possessed, when it is raised above all that it can possess, whether below or above, apart from God.

6. To these three virtues, then, we have to lead the three faculties of the soul, informing each faculty by each one of them, and stripping it and setting it in darkness<sup>8</sup> concerning all things save only these three virtues. And this is the spiritual night which just now we called active; for the soul does that which in it lies in order to enter therein. And

<sup>1</sup> Romans viii, 24.

<sup>2</sup> A, B: 'for if a man possesseth what he seeth, how doth he hope for it?'

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'Christ our Lord,' as in several other places below.

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke xiv, 33.

<sup>5</sup> St. Luke xi, 5. E.p. omits: 'his friend.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'must prepare itself for the perfection of these three virtues.'

<sup>7</sup> Isaias vi, 2.

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'informing the understanding by faith, stripping the memory of every possession and informing the will by charity, stripping them and setting them in darkness . . .'

even as, in the night of sense, we described a method of voiding the faculties of sense of their sensible objects, with regard to the desire, so that the soul might go forth from the beginning of its course to the mean,<sup>1</sup> which is faith; even so, in this spiritual night, with the favour of God, we shall describe a method whereby the spiritual faculties are voided and purified of all that is not God, and are set in darkness concerning these three virtues, which, as we have said, are the means and preparation for the union of the soul with God.

7. In this method is found all security against the crafts of the devil and against the efficacy<sup>2</sup> of self-love and its ramifications, which is wont most subtly to deceive and hinder spiritual persons on their road, when they know not how to become detached and to govern themselves according to these three virtues; and thus they are never able to reach the substance and purity of spiritual good, nor do they journey by so straight and short a road as they might.

8. And it must be noted that I am now speaking particularly to those who have begun to enter the state of contemplation, because as far as this concerns beginners it must be described somewhat more amply,<sup>3</sup> as we shall note in the second book, God willing, when we treat of the properties of these beginners.

## CHAPTER VII

*Wherein is described how strait is the way that leads to eternal<sup>4</sup> life and how completely detached and disencumbered must be those that will walk in it. We begin to speak of the detachment of the understanding.*

WE have now to describe the detachment and purity of the three faculties of the soul and for this are necessary a far greater knowledge and spirituality than mine, in order to make clear to spiritual persons how strait is this road which, said Our Saviour, leads to life; so that, persuaded of this, they may not marvel at the emptiness and detachment to which, in this night, we have to abandon the faculties of the soul.

2. To this end must be carefully noted the words which Our

<sup>1</sup> [Or 'middle.' Cf. p. 19, n. 11, above.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p. reads 'craft' for 'efficacy.'

<sup>3</sup> So Alc. A, B end the chapter here. E.p. omits the reference to the 'second book' as being inexact, and adds simply: '[more amply] when we treat of the properties of these beginners.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits 'eternal.'

Saviour used, in the seventh chapter of Saint Matthew, concerning this road,<sup>1</sup> as follows: *Quam angusta porta, et arcta via est, quæ ducit ad vitam, et pauci sunt, qui inveniunt eam.*<sup>2</sup> This signifies: How strait is the gate and how narrow the way that leadeth unto life, and few there are that find it! In this passage we must carefully note the emphasis and insistence which are contained in that word *Quam*. For it is as if He had said: In truth the way is very strait, more so than you think. And likewise it is to be noted that He says first that the gate is strait, to make it clear that, in order for the soul to enter by this gate, which is Christ, and which comes at the beginning of the road, the will must first be straitened and detached in all things sensual and temporal, and God must be loved above them all; which belongs to the night of sense, as we have said.

3. He then says that the way is narrow—that is to say, the way of perfection—in order to make it clear that, to travel upon the way of perfection, the soul has not only to enter by the strait gate,<sup>3</sup> emptying itself of things of sense, but has also to straiten<sup>4</sup> itself, freeing and disencumbering itself completely in that which pertains to the spirit. And thus we can apply what He says of the strait gate to the sensual part of man; and what He says of the narrow road we can understand of the spiritual or the rational part; and, when He says ‘Few there are that find it,’ the reason of this must be noted, which is that there are few who can enter, and desire to enter, into this complete detachment and emptiness of spirit. For this path ascending the high mountain of perfection leads upward, and is narrow, and therefore requires travellers that have no burden weighing upon them with respect to lower things, neither aught that embarrasses them with respect to higher things: and, as this is a matter wherein we must seek after and attain to God alone, God alone must be the object of our search and attainment.

4. Hence it is clearly seen that the soul must not only be disencumbered from that which belongs to the creatures, but likewise, as it travels, must be annihilated and detached from all that belongs to its spirit. Wherefore Our Lord, instructing us and leading us into this road, gave, in the eighth chapter of Saint Mark, that wonderful teaching of which I think it may almost be said that, the more necessary it is

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: ‘which [words] we shall now apply to this dark night and lofty road of perfection.’

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew vii, 14.

<sup>3</sup> A alone reads: ‘by the way of perfection, that is, by the strait gate.’

<sup>4</sup> [The Spanish verb, used also at the end of the preceding paragraph, is derived from the adjective.]

for spiritual persons, the less it is practised by them.<sup>1</sup> As this teaching is so important and so much to our purpose, I shall reproduce it here in full, and expound it according to its genuine, spiritual sense. He says, then, thus: *Si quis vult me sequi, deneget semetipsum: et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me. Qui enim voluerit animam suam salvam facere, perdet eam: qui autem perdiderit animam suam propter me . . . salvam faciet eam.*<sup>2</sup> This signifies: If any man will follow My road, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For he that will save his soul shall lose it; but he that loses it for My sake, shall gain it.

5. Oh, that one could show us how to understand, practise and experience what this counsel is which<sup>3</sup> our Saviour here gives us concerning self-denial,<sup>4</sup> so that spiritual persons might see in how different a way they should<sup>5</sup> conduct themselves upon this road from that which many of them think proper! For they believe that any kind of retirement and reformation of life suffices; and others are content with practising the virtues and continuing in prayer and pursuing mortification; but they attain not to detachment and poverty or selflessness<sup>6</sup> or spiritual purity (which are all one), which the Lord here commends to us; for they prefer feeding and clothing their natural selves with spiritual feelings and consolations,<sup>7</sup> to stripping themselves of all things, and denying themselves all things, for God's sake. For they think that it suffices to deny themselves worldly things without annihilating and purifying themselves of spiritual attachment. Wherefore it comes to pass that, when there presents itself to them any of this solid and perfect<sup>8</sup> spirituality, consisting in the annihilation of all sweetness in God, in aridity, distaste and trial, which is the true spiritual cross, and the detachment of the spiritual poverty of Christ, they flee from it as from death, and seek only sweetness and delectable communion with God. This is not self-denial and detachment of spirit, but spiritual gluttony. Herein, spiritually, they become enemies of the Cross of Christ; for true spirituality seeks for God's sake that which is distasteful rather than that which is delectable; and inclines itself rather to suffering than to consolation; and desires to go without all blessings

<sup>1</sup> The lines from this point to the Latin text are omitted by A and B.

<sup>2</sup> St. Mark viii, 34-5.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'what is contained in this so lofty instruction which . . .'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the denial of ourselves to our very selves.']

<sup>5</sup> A, B, e.p. have 'it behoves them to' for 'they should.'

<sup>6</sup> [*enagenación*, a word which to-day means 'alienation,' 'rapture,' 'derangement (of mind),' but in Covarrubias' dictionary (1611) is also defined as 'giving to another what is one's own.']

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'with consolations.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'and perfect.'

for God's sake rather than to possess them; and to endure aridities and afflictions rather than to enjoy sweet communications, knowing that this is to follow Christ and to deny oneself, and that the other is perchance to seek oneself in God, which is clean contrary to love.<sup>1</sup> For to seek oneself in God is to seek the favours and refreshments of God; but to seek God in oneself is not only to desire to be without both of these for God's sake, but to be disposed to choose, for Christ's sake, all that is most distasteful, whether in relation to God or to the world; and this is love of God.

6. Oh, that one could tell us how far Our Lord desires this self-denial to be carried! It must certainly be like to death and annihilation, temporal, natural and spiritual, in all things that the will esteems, wherein consists all self-denial.<sup>2</sup> And it is this that Our Lord meant when He said: 'He that will save his life, the same shall lose it.' That is to say: He that will possess anything or seek anything for himself, the same shall lose it; and he that loses his soul for My sake, the same shall gain it. That is to say: He who for Christ's sake renounces all that his will can desire and enjoy, and chooses that which is most like to the Cross (which the Lord Himself, through Saint John, describes as hating his soul<sup>3</sup>), the same shall gain it. And this His Majesty taught to those two disciples who went and begged Him for a place on His right hand and on His left; when, giving no countenance to their request for such glory, He offered them the chalice which He had to drink, as a thing more precious and more secure upon this earth than is fruition.<sup>4</sup>

7. This chalice is death to the natural self, a death attained through the detachment and annihilation of that self, in order that the soul may travel by this narrow path, with respect to all its connections with sense, as we have said, and according to the spirit,<sup>5</sup> as we shall now say; that is, in its understanding and in its enjoyment and in its feeling. And, as a result, not only has the soul made its renunciation as regards both sense and spirit, but it is not hindered, even by that which is spiritual, in taking the narrow way, on which there is room only for self-denial (as the Saviour explains), and the Cross, which is the staff wherewith one may reach one's goal,<sup>6</sup> and whereby the road is greatly

<sup>1</sup> A, B omit this last clause.

<sup>2</sup> So Alc., A, B, C, D. E.p. has: 'all gain.' The gain, however [says P. Silverio], is rather a result of the complete self-denial of which the Saint is here speaking.

<sup>3</sup> St. John xii, 25.

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew xx, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Thus e.p. Alc., A, B [and P. Silverio] read 'soul' for 'spirit.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'the staff whereon to lean.'

lightened and made easy. Wherefore Our Lord said through Saint Matthew: 'My yoke is easy and My burden is light';<sup>1</sup> which burden is the cross. For if a man resolve to submit himself to carrying this cross—that is to say, if he resolve to desire in truth to meet trials and to bear them in all things for God's sake, he will find in them all great relief and sweetness wherewith he may travel upon this road, detached from all things and desiring nothing. Yet, if he desire to possess anything—whether it come from God or from any other source—with any feeling of attachment, he has not stripped and denied himself in all things; and thus he will be unable to walk along this narrow path or to climb upward by it.<sup>2</sup>

8. I would, then, that I could convince spiritual persons that this road to God consists not in a multiplicity of meditations nor in ways or methods of such, nor in consolations, although these things may in their own way be necessary to beginners; but that it consists only in the one thing that is needful, which is the ability to deny oneself truly, according to that which is without and to that which is within, giving oneself up to suffering for Christ's sake, and to total annihilation. For the soul that practises this suffering and annihilation will achieve all that those other exercises can achieve, and that can be found in them, and even more. And if a soul be found wanting in this exercise, which is the sum and root of the virtues, all its other methods are so much beating about the bush, and profiting not at all, although its meditations and communications may be as lofty as those of the angels.<sup>3</sup> For progress comes not save through the imitation of Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no man comes to the Father but by Him, even as He Himself says through Saint John.<sup>4</sup> And elsewhere He says: 'I am the door; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.'<sup>5</sup> Wherefore, as it seems to me, any spirituality that would fain walk in sweetness and with ease, and flees from the imitation of Christ, is worthless.

9. And, as I have said that Christ is the Way, and that this Way is death to our natural selves, in things both of sense and of spirit, I will now explain how we are to die, following the example of Christ, for He is our example and light.

10. In the first place, it is certain that He died as to sense, spiritually, in His life, besides dying naturally, at His death. For, as He said, He

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew xi, 30.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits 'upward.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. has 'very lofty' and omits 'as those of the angels,' which is found, however, in all the Codices.

<sup>4</sup> St. John xiv, 6.

<sup>5</sup> St. John x, 9.

had not in His life where to lay His head, and at His death this was even truer.

11. In the second place, it is certain that, at the moment of His death, He was likewise annihilated<sup>1</sup> in His soul, and was deprived of any relief and consolation, since His Father left Him in<sup>2</sup> the most intense aridity, according to the lower part of His nature.<sup>3</sup> Wherefore He had perforce to cry out, saying: 'My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken Me?'<sup>4</sup> This was the greatest desolation, with respect to sense, that He had suffered in His life.<sup>5</sup> And thus He wrought herein<sup>6</sup> the greatest work that He had ever wrought, whether in miracles or in mighty works, during the whole of His life, either upon earth or in Heaven,<sup>7</sup> which was the reconciliation and union of mankind, through grace, with God. And this, as I say, was at the moment and the time when this Lord was most completely annihilated in everything. Annihilated, that is to say, with respect to human reputation; since, when men saw Him die,<sup>8</sup> they mocked Him rather than esteemed Him; and also with respect to nature, since His nature was annihilated when He died; and further with respect to the spiritual<sup>9</sup> consolation and protection of the Father, since at that time He forsook Him, that He might pay the whole of man's debt and unite him with God, being thus annihilated and reduced as it were<sup>10</sup> to nothing. Wherefore David says concerning Him: *Ad nihilum redactus sum, et nescivi*.<sup>11</sup> This he said that the truly spiritual man may understand the mystery of the gate and of the way of Christ, and so become united with God, and may know that, the more completely he is annihilated for God's sake, according to these two parts, the sensual and the spiritual, the more completely is he united to God and the greater is the work which he accomplishes. And when at last he is reduced to nothing, which will be the greatest extreme of humility, spiritual<sup>12</sup> union will be wrought between the soul and God, which in this life is the greatest and the highest state attainable. This consists not, then, in refreshment and in consolations and spiritual feelings, but in a living death of the Cross, both as to sense and as to spirit—that is, both inwardly and outwardly.

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'He was likewise forsaken and, as it were, annihilated.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'left Him without consolation and in.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'according to . . . His nature.'

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew xxvii, 46.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. has 'then' for 'herein.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'either upon earth or in Heaven.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'on a tree.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'and as though reduced, as it were.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p. omits 'spiritual.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p. omits 'spiritual.'

<sup>11</sup> Psalm lxxii, 22 [A.V., lxxiii, 22].

<sup>12</sup> E.p. omits this sentence.

12. I will not pursue this subject farther, although I have no desire to finish speaking of it, for I see that Christ<sup>1</sup> is known very little by those who consider themselves His friends: we see them seeking in Him their own pleasures and consolations because of their great love for themselves, but not loving His bitter trials and His death because of their great love for Him. I am speaking now of those who consider themselves His friends; for such as live far away, withdrawn from Him, men of great learning and influence, and all others who live yonder, with the world, and are eager about their ambitions and their prelacies, may be said not to know Christ; and their end, however good, will be very bitter. Of such I make no mention in these lines; but mention will be made of them on the Day of Judgment, for to them it was fitting to speak first this word of God,<sup>2</sup> as to those whom God set up as a target for it,<sup>3</sup> by reason of their learning and their high position.

13. But let us now address the understanding of the spiritual man, and particularly that of the man to whom God has granted the favour of leading him into the state of contemplation (for, as I have said, I am now speaking to these in particular),<sup>4</sup> and let us say how such a man must direct himself toward God in faith, and purify himself from contrary things, constraining himself<sup>5</sup> that he may enter upon this narrow path of obscure contemplation.

## CHAPTER VIII

*Which describes in a general way how no creature and no knowledge that can be comprehended by the understanding can serve as a proximate means of Divine union with God.*

**B**EFORE we treat of the proper and fitting means of union with God, which is faith, it behoves us to prove how no thing, created or imagined, can serve the understanding as a proper means of union with God; and how all that the understanding can attain serves

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'that Jesus Christ.'

<sup>2</sup> [The reference seems to be to Acts xiii, 46, the point of it being in the second part of that verse. The Spanish will also bear the interpretation: 'for them it behoved first (i.e., before others) to speak this word of God, as (being) those whom God set up as guides, etc.']

<sup>3</sup> [By this vivid phrase the author seems to mean: 'whom God held to be suitable recipients of it.']

<sup>4</sup> A, B omit the parenthesis.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. has 'girding' for 'constraining.'

it rather as an impediment than as such a means, if it should desire to cling to it. And now, in this chapter, we shall prove this in a general way, and afterwards we shall begin to speak in detail, treating in turn of all kinds of knowledge that the understanding may receive from any sense, whether inward or outward, and of the inconveniences and evils that may result from all these kinds of inward and outward knowledge,<sup>1</sup> when it clings not, as it progresses, to the proper means, which is faith.

2. It must be understood, then, that, according to a rule of philosophy, all means must be proportioned to the end; that is to say, they must have some connection and resemblance with the end, such as is enough and sufficient for the desired end to be attained through them. I take an example. A man desires to reach a city; he has of necessity to travel by the road, which is the means that brings him to this same city and connects<sup>2</sup> him with it. Another example.<sup>3</sup> Fire is to be combined and united with wood; it is necessary that heat, which is the means, shall first prepare the wood, by conveying to it so many degrees of warmth that it will have great resemblance and proportion to fire. Now if one would prepare the wood by any other than the proper means—namely, with heat—as, for example, with air or water or earth, it would be impossible for the wood to be united with the fire, just as it would be to reach the city without going by the road that leads to it.<sup>4</sup> Wherefore, in order that the understanding may be united with God in this life, so far as is possible,<sup>5</sup> it must of necessity employ that means that unites it with Him and that bears the greatest resemblance to Him.

3. Here it must be pointed out that, among all the creatures, the highest or the lowest, there is none that comes near to God or bears any resemblance to His Being. For, although it is true that all creatures have, as theologians say, a certain relation to God, and bear a Divine impress (some more and others less, according to the greater or lesser excellence of their nature), yet there is no essential resemblance or connection between them and God—on the contrary, the distance between their being and His Divine Being is infinite. Wherefore it is impossible for the understanding to attain to God<sup>6</sup> by means of the creatures, whether these be celestial or earthly, inasmuch as there is no proportion or resemblance between them. Wherefore, when David speaks of the heavenly creatures, he says: 'There is none among the

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'kinds of knowledge.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds 'likewise.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. adds: 'in it' [i.e., in this life].

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'unites.']

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'just as . . . leads to it.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. adds 'perfectly.'

gods like unto Thee, O Lord';<sup>1</sup> meaning by the gods the angels<sup>2</sup> and holy souls. And elsewhere: 'O God, Thy way is in the holy place. What God is there so great as our God?'<sup>3</sup> As though he were to say: The way of approach to Thee, O God, is a holy way—that is, the purity of faith. For what God can there be so great? That is to say: What angel will there be so exalted in his being, and what saint so exalted in glory, as to be a proportionate and sufficient road by which a man may come to Thee? And the same David, speaking likewise of earthly and heavenly things both together, says: 'The Lord is high and looketh on lowly things, and the high things He knoweth afar off.'<sup>4</sup> As though he had said: Lofty in His own Being, He sees that the being of things here below<sup>5</sup> is very low in comparison with His lofty Being;<sup>6</sup> and the lofty things, which are the celestial creatures, He sees and knows to be very far from His Being. All the creatures, then, cannot serve as a proportionate means to the understanding whereby it may reach God.<sup>7</sup>

4. Just so all that the imagination can imagine and the understanding can receive and understand in this life is not, nor can it be, a proximate means of union with God. For, if we speak of natural things, since understanding can understand naught save that which is contained within, and comes under the category of, forms and imaginings of things that are received through the bodily senses, the which things, we have said, cannot serve as means, it can make no use of natural intelligence. And, if we speak of the supernatural (in so far as is possible in this life of our ordinary faculties<sup>8</sup>), the understanding in its bodily prison has no preparation or capacity for receiving the clear knowledge of God; for such knowledge belongs not to this state, and we must either die or remain without receiving it. Wherefore Moses, when he entreated God for this clear knowledge, was told by God that he would be unable to see Him, in these words<sup>9</sup>: 'No man shall see Me and remain alive.'<sup>10</sup> Wherefore Saint John says: 'No man hath seen God at any time,<sup>11</sup> neither aught that is like to Him.' And Saint Paul says, with Isaias: 'Eye hath not seen Him, nor hath ear heard Him,

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxxv, 8 [A.V., lxxxvi, 8].

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'the holy angels.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxxvi, 14 [A.V., lxxvii, 13] [*lit.*, 'in that which is holy'].

<sup>4</sup> Psalm cxxxvii, 6 [A.V., cxxxviii, 6].

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'of the things of the earth.'

<sup>6</sup> B omits this sentence.

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: '... means for perfectly reaching God.'

<sup>8</sup> These last four words are found only in Alc.

<sup>9</sup> E.p. abbreviates: '... receiving it. Wherefore God said to Moses: No man ...'

<sup>10</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 20.

<sup>11</sup> St. John i, 18. E.p. omits 'neither ... Him,' which is found in all the Codices.

neither hath it entered into the heart of man.<sup>1</sup> And it is for this reason that, as is said in the Acts of the Apostles,<sup>2</sup> Moses, in the bush, durst not consider for as long as God was present; for he knew that his understanding could make no consideration that was fitting concerning God, corresponding to the sense which he had of God's presence.<sup>3</sup> And of Elias, our father,<sup>4</sup> it is said that he covered his face on the Mount in the presence of God<sup>5</sup>—an action signifying the blinding of his understanding, which he wrought there, daring not to lay so base a hand upon that which was so high, and seeing clearly that whatsoever he might consider or understand with any precision would be very far from God and completely unlike Him.

5. Wherefore no supernatural apprehension or knowledge in this mortal state can serve as a proximate means to the high union of love with God. For all that can be understood by the understanding, that can be tasted by the will, and that can be invented by the imagination is most unlike to God and bears no proportion to Him, as we have said. All this Isaias admirably explained in that most noteworthy passage,<sup>6</sup> where he says: 'To what thing have ye been able to liken God? Or what image will ye make that is like to Him? Will the workman in iron perchance be able to make a graven image? Or will he that works gold be able to imitate Him<sup>7</sup> with gold, or the silversmith with plates of silver?'<sup>8</sup> By the workman in iron is signified the understanding, the office of which is to form intelligences and strip them of the iron of species and images. By the workman in gold is understood the will, which is able to receive the figure and the form of pleasure, caused by the gold of love.<sup>9</sup> By the silversmith, who is spoken of as being unable to form<sup>10</sup> Him with plates of silver, is understood the memory, with the imagination, whereof it may be said with great propriety that its knowledge and the imaginings that it can invent<sup>11</sup> and make are like plates of silver. And thus it is as though he had said: Neither the understanding with its intelligence will be able to understand aught that is like Him, nor can the will taste pleasure and sweetness that bears any resemblance

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 9; Isaias lxiv, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Acts vii, 32.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: '... concerning God, though this sprang from the profound sense which he had of God[']s presence[.]'

<sup>4</sup> Only Alc., C read: 'our father.'

<sup>5</sup> 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] xix, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Alc. alone has: 'in that most noteworthy passage.'

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'feign Him.'] E.p.: 'figure Him' [or 'form Him']. A, B: 'make Him.'

<sup>8</sup> Isaias xl, 18–19.

<sup>9</sup> A, B, e.p.: '... gold of the love wherewith it loves.'

<sup>10</sup> [All authorities read 'form' (or 'figure') here. Cf. n. 7, above.]

<sup>11</sup> [This is the word (*fingir*, 'feign'), translated above as 'imitate.' Cf. n. 7, above.]

to that which is God, neither can the memory set in the imagination ideas and images that represent Him. It is clear, then, that none of these kinds of knowledge can lead the understanding direct to God; and that, in order to reach Him, a soul must rather proceed by not understanding than by desiring to understand; and by blinding itself and setting itself in darkness, rather than by opening its eyes, in order the more nearly to approach the ray Divine.

6. And thus it is that contemplation, whereby the understanding has the loftiest knowledge of God,<sup>1</sup> is called mystical theology, which signifies secret wisdom of God; for it is secret even to the understanding that receives it. For that reason Saint Dionysius calls it a ray of darkness. Of this the prophet Baruch says: 'There is none that knoweth its way, nor any that can think of its paths.'<sup>2</sup> It is clear, then, that the understanding must be blind to all the paths that are open to it in order that it may be united with God. Aristotle says that, even as are the eyes of the bat with regard to the sun, which is total darkness to it, even so is our understanding to that which is greater light in God, which is total darkness to us. And he says further that, the loftier and clearer are the things of God in themselves, the more completely unknown and obscure are they to us. This likewise the Apostle affirms, saying: 'The lofty things of God are the least known unto men.'<sup>3</sup>

7. But we should never end if we continued at this rate to quote authorities and arguments to prove and make clear that among all created things, and things that can be apprehended by the understanding, there is no ladder whereby the understanding can attain to this high Lord. Rather it is necessary to know that, if the understanding should seek to make use of all these things, or of any of them, as a proximate means to such union, they would be not only a hindrance, but even an occasion of numerous errors and delusions in the ascent of this mount.

<sup>1</sup> So Alc. All other authorities read: '... the understanding is enlightened by God.'

<sup>2</sup> Baruch iii, 23.

<sup>3</sup> [Possibly a further reference to 1 Corinthians ii, 9-10, quoted above.]

## CHAPTER IX

*How faith is the proximate and proportionate means to the understanding whereby the soul may attain to the Divine union of love. This is proved by passages and figures from Divine Scripture.<sup>1</sup>*

FROM what has been said it is to be inferred that, in order for the understanding to be prepared for this Divine union, it must be pure and void of all that pertains to sense, and detached<sup>2</sup> and freed from all that can clearly be apprehended by the understanding, profoundly hushed and put to silence, and leaning upon faith, which alone is the proximate and proportionate means whereby the soul is united with God; for such is the likeness between itself and God that<sup>3</sup> there is no other difference, save that which exists between seeing God and believing in Him. For, even as God is infinite, so faith sets Him before us as infinite; and, as He is Three and One, it sets Him before us as Three and One; and, as God is darkness to our understanding, even so does faith likewise blind and dazzle our understanding.<sup>4</sup> And thus, by this means alone, God manifests Himself to the soul in Divine light, which passes all understanding. And therefore, the greater is the faith of the soul, the more closely is it united with God. It is this that Saint Paul meant in the passage which we quoted above, where he says: 'He that will be united with God must believe.'<sup>5</sup> That is, he must walk by faith as he journeys to Him, the understanding being blind and in darkness, walking in faith alone;<sup>6</sup> for beneath this darkness the understanding is united with God, and beneath it God is hidden, even as David said in these words: 'He set darkness under His feet. And He rose upon the cherubim, and flew upon the wings of the wind. And He made darkness, and the dark water, His hiding-place.'<sup>7</sup>

2. By his saying that He set darkness beneath His feet, and that He took the darkness for a hiding-place, and that His tabernacle round about Him was in the dark water, is denoted the obscurity of the faith wherein He is concealed. And by his saying that He rose upon the cherubim and flew upon the wings of the winds, is understood His

<sup>1</sup> This last sentence is found only in Alc. and in e.p.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and detached.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'such is . . . God that,' which is found in all the Codices.

<sup>4</sup> This clause ('and as God . . . our understanding') is omitted from e.p.

<sup>5</sup> Hebrews xi, 6.

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'It is this that St. Paul . . . in faith alone.'

<sup>7</sup> Psalm xvii, 10-12 [A.V., xviii, 9-11]. E.p. modifies thus: 'And He made darkness His hiding-place; round about Him He set His tabernacle, which is dark water, among the clouds of the air.'

soaring above all understanding. For the cherubim denote those who understand or contemplate. And the wings of the winds signify the subtle and lofty ideas and conceptions of spirits, above all of which is His Being, and to which none, by his own power, can attain.

3. This we learn from an illustration in the Scriptures. When Solomon had completed the building of the Temple, God came down in darkness and filled the Temple so that the children of Israel could not see; whereupon Solomon spake and said: 'The Lord hath promised that He will dwell in darkness.'<sup>1</sup> Likewise He appeared in darkness to Moses on the Mount, where God was concealed. And whensoever God communicated Himself intimately, He appeared in darkness, as may be seen in Job, where the Scripture says that God spoke with him from the darkness of the air.<sup>2</sup> All these mentions of darkness signify the obscurity of the faith wherein the Divinity is concealed, when It communicates Itself to the soul; which will be ended when, as Saint Paul says, that which is in part shall be ended,<sup>3</sup> which is this darkness of faith, and that which is perfect shall come, which is the Divine light. Of this we have a good illustration in the army of Gedeon, whereof it is said that all the soldiers had lamps in their hands, which they saw not, because they had them concealed in the darkness of the pitchers; but, when these pitchers were broken, the light was seen.<sup>4</sup> Just so does faith, which is foreshadowed by those pitchers, contain within itself Divine light;<sup>5</sup> which, when it is ended and broken, at the ending and breaking of this mortal life, will allow the glory and light of the Divinity, which was contained in it,<sup>6</sup> to appear.

4. It is clear, then, that, if the soul in this life is to attain to union with God, and commune directly with Him, it must unite itself with the darkness whereof Solomon spake, wherein God had promised to dwell, and must draw near to the darkness of the air wherein God was pleased to reveal His secrets to Job, and must take in its hands, in darkness, the jars of Gedeon, that it may have in its hands (that is, in the works of its will) the light, which is the union of love, though it be in the darkness of faith, so that, when the pitchers of this life are broken, which alone have kept from it the light of faith, it may see God<sup>7</sup> face to face in glory.

<sup>1</sup> 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] viii, 12.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 10.

<sup>5</sup> A, e.p. add: 'that is, the truth of that which God is in Himself.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'which was contained in it.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits 'which . . . of faith' and inserts 'God,' which word is not found in the Codices.

<sup>2</sup> Job xxxviii, 1; xl, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Judges vii, 16.

5. It now remains to describe in detail all the types of knowledge and the apprehensions which the understanding can receive; the hindrance and the harm which it can receive upon this road of faith; and the way wherein the soul must conduct itself so that, whether they proceed from the senses or from the spirit, they may cause it, not harm, but profit.

## CHAPTER X

*Wherein distinction is made between all apprehensions and types of knowledge which can be comprehended by the understanding.*

IN order to treat in detail of the profit and the harm which may come to the soul, with respect to this means to Divine union which we have described—namely, faith—through the ideas and apprehensions of the understanding, it is necessary here to make a distinction between all the apprehensions, whether natural or supernatural, that the soul may receive, so that then, with regard to each of them in order, we may direct the understanding with greater clearness into the night and obscurity of faith. This will be done with all possible brevity.

2. It must be known, then, that the understanding can receive knowledge and intelligence by two channels: the one natural and the other supernatural. By the natural channel is meant all that the understanding can understand, whether by means of the bodily senses or by its own power.<sup>1</sup> The supernatural channel is all that is given to the understanding over and above its natural ability and capacity.

3. Of these kinds of supernatural knowledge, some are corporeal and some are spiritual. The corporeal are two in number: some are received by means of the outward bodily senses; others, by means of the inward bodily senses, wherein is comprehended all that the imagination can comprehend,<sup>2</sup> form and conceive.

4. The spiritual supernatural knowledge is likewise of two kinds: that which is distinct and special in its nature, and that which is confused, general and dark. Of the distinct and special kind there are four manners of apprehension which are communicated to the spirit without the aid of any bodily sense: these are visions, revelations, locutions

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'by itself.'] E.p. adds: 'after these [senses].' A, B read: 'or by the channel of itself.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'can apprehend.'

and spiritual feelings. The obscure and general type of knowledge is of one kind alone, which is contemplation that is given in faith. To this we have to lead the soul by bringing it thereto<sup>1</sup> through all these other means, beginning with the first and detaching it from them.

## CHAPTER XI

*Of the hindrance and harm that may be caused by apprehensions of the understanding which proceed from that which is supernaturally represented to the outward bodily senses; and how the soul is to conduct itself therein.*

THE first kinds of knowledge whereof we have spoken in the preceding chapter are those that belong to the understanding and come through natural channels. Of these, since we have treated them already in the first book, where we led the soul into the night of sense, we shall here say not a word, for in that place we gave suitable instruction to the soul concerning them. What we have to treat, therefore, in the present chapter, will be solely those kinds of knowledge and those apprehensions which belong to the understanding and come supernaturally, by way of the outward bodily senses—namely, by seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. With respect to all these there may come, and there are wont to come,<sup>2</sup> to spiritual persons representations and objects of a supernatural kind.<sup>3</sup> With respect to sight, they are apt to picture figures and forms of persons belonging to the life to come—the forms of certain saints, and representations of angels, good and evil, and certain lights and brightnesses of an extraordinary kind. And with the ears they hear certain extraordinary words, sometimes spoken by those figures<sup>4</sup> that they see, sometimes without seeing the person who speaks them. As to the sense of smell, they sometimes perceive the sweetest perfumes with the senses, without knowing whence they proceed. Likewise, as to taste, it comes to pass that they are conscious of the sweetest savours, and, as to touch, they experience great delight<sup>5</sup>—sometimes to such a degree that it is as though all the bones and the marrow rejoice and sing<sup>6</sup> and are bathed in delight;<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alc. breaks off the chapter here.

<sup>2</sup> A, B, e.p. have 'happen [*acacer*]' for 'come' [which in the Spanish is *nacer*, 'be born'], both here and in the preceding clause.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'and objects represented and set before them in a supernatural way.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'those persons.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'and, as to touch, of its own kind of enjoyment and sweetness.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Zit*, 'and blossom.']

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'are bathed therein.'

this is like that which we call spiritual unction, which in pure souls<sup>1</sup> proceeds from the spirit and flows into the very members. And this sensible sweetness is a very ordinary thing with<sup>2</sup> spiritual persons, for it comes to them from their sensible affection and devotion,<sup>3</sup> to a greater or a lesser degree, to each one after his own manner.

2. And it must be known that, although all these things may happen to the bodily senses in the way of God, we must never rely upon them or accept them, but must always fly from them, without trying to ascertain whether they be good or evil; for, the more completely exterior and corporeal they are, the less certainly are they of God.<sup>4</sup> For it is more proper and habitual<sup>5</sup> to God to communicate Himself to the spirit, wherein there is more security and profit for the soul, than to sense, wherein there is ordinarily much danger and deception; for bodily sense judges and makes its estimate of spiritual things by thinking that they are as it feels them to be, whereas they are as different as is the body from the soul and sensuality<sup>6</sup> from reason. For the bodily sense is as ignorant of spiritual things as is a beast of rational things, and even more so.

3. So he that esteems such things errs greatly and exposes himself to great peril of being deceived; in any case he will have within himself a complete<sup>7</sup> impediment to the attainment of spirituality. For, as we have said, between spiritual things and all these bodily things there exists no kind of proportion whatever. And thus it may always be supposed that such things as these are more likely to be of the devil than of God; for the devil has more influence in that which is exterior and corporeal, and can deceive a soul more easily thereby than by that which is more interior and spiritual.

4. And the more exterior are these corporeal forms and objects in themselves, the less do they profit the interior and spiritual nature, because of the great distance and the lack of proportion existing between the corporeal and the spiritual. For, although there is communicated by their means a certain degree of spirituality, as is always the case with things that come from God, much less is communicated than would be the case if the same things were more interior and spiritual. And thus they very easily become the means whereby error

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'in simple souls.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'is wont to happen to.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'from the affection and devotion of the sensible spirit.']

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'the less certainty is there of their being of God.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and habitual.'

<sup>6</sup> [P. Silverio remarks here that] we must understand [as frequently elsewhere] 'sensibility' and not sensuality in the grosser sense.

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'a great.'

and presumption and vanity grow in the soul; since, as they are so palpable and material, they stir the senses greatly, and it appears to the judgment of the soul that they are of greater importance because they are more readily felt. Thus the soul goes after them, abandoning faith and<sup>1</sup> thinking that the light which it receives from them is the guide and means to its desired goal, which is union with God. But the more attention it pays to such things, the farther it strays from the true way and means, which are faith.

5. And, besides all this, when the soul sees that such extraordinary things happen to it, it is often visited, insidiously and secretly by a certain complacency, so that it thinks itself to be of some importance in the eyes of God; which is contrary to humility. The devil, too, knows how to insinuate into the soul a secret satisfaction with itself, which at times becomes very evident; wherefore he frequently represents these objects to the senses, setting before the eyes figures of saints and most beauteous lights; and before the ears words very much dissembled; and representing also sweetest perfumes, delicious tastes<sup>2</sup> and things delectable to the touch; to the end that, by producing desires for such things, he may lead the soul into much evil. These representations and feelings, therefore, must always be rejected; for, even though some of them be of God, He is not offended by their rejection, nor is the effect and fruit which He desires to produce in the soul by means of them any the less surely received because the soul rejects them and desires them not.

6. The reason for this is that corporeal vision, or feeling in respect to any of the other senses, or any other communication of the most interior kind, if it be of God, produces its effect<sup>3</sup> upon the spirit at the very moment when it appears or is felt, without giving the soul time or opportunity to deliberate whether it will accept or reject it. For, even as God gives these things supernaturally, without effort<sup>4</sup> on the part of the soul, and independently of its capacity, even so likewise, without respect to its effort or capacity, God produces in it the effect that He desires by means of such things; for this is a thing that is wrought and brought to pass in the spirit passively;<sup>5</sup> and thus its acceptance or non-acceptance consists not in the acceptance or the rejection of it by the will. It is as though fire were applied to a person's

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'abandoning faith and.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and sweetnesses in the mouth.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'its first effect.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'For, even as God [i.e., His work] begins in these things supernaturally without active effort . . .'

<sup>5</sup> The 1630 edition adds: 'without its free consent.'

naked body: it would matter little whether or no he wished to be burned; the fire would of necessity accomplish its work. Just so is it with visions and representations that are good: even though the soul desire it not,<sup>1</sup> they work their effect upon it, chiefly and especially in the soul, rather than in the body. And likewise those that come from the devil (without the consent of the soul) cause it disturbance or aridity or vanity or presumption in the spirit. Yet these are not so effective to work evil as are those of God to work good; for those of the devil can only set in action the first movements of the will,<sup>2</sup> and move it no farther, unless the soul be consenting thereto; and such trouble continues not long unless the soul's lack of courage and prudence be the occasion of its continuance. But the visions that are of God penetrate the soul and move the will to love, and produce their effect,<sup>3</sup> which the soul cannot resist even though it would, any more than the window can resist the sun's rays when they strike it.

7. The soul, then, must never presume to desire to receive them, even though, as I say, they be of God; for, if it desire to receive them, there follow six inconveniences.

The first is that faith<sup>4</sup> grows gradually less; for things that are experienced by the senses derogate from faith; since faith, as we have said, transcends every sense. And thus the soul withdraws itself from the means of union with God when it closes not its eyes to all these things of sense.

Secondly, if they be not rejected, they are a hindrance to the spirit, for the soul rests in them and its spirit soars not to the invisible. This was one of the reasons why the Lord said to His disciples that it was needful for Him to go away that the Holy Spirit might come; so, too, He forbade Mary Magdalene to touch His feet, after His resurrection, that she might be grounded in faith.

Thirdly, the soul becomes attached to these things and advances not to true resignation and detachment of spirit.

Fourthly, it begins to lose the effect of them and the inward

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'even . . . not.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'for those of the devil stop at the first movements and cannot move the will.' This, no doubt, was the Saint's meaning, for the Church teaches that the devil cannot influence the will directly, though he may do so indirectly, principally through the senses and the imagination.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: '... effect of excitement and overpowering delight, which makes ready and prepares [the soul] to give its free and loving consent to good.' It omits the rest of the paragraph as in the text and continues: 'But although these outward visions and feelings be of God, if the soul make much account of them and endeavour to desire to accept them, there follow six inconveniences. The first . . .'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'that the perfection of guidance through faith.'

spirituality which they cause it, because it sets its eyes upon their sensual aspect, which is the least important. And thus it receives not so fully the spirituality which they cause,<sup>1</sup> which is impressed and preserved more securely when all things of sense are rejected, since these are very different from pure spirit.

Fifthly, the soul begins to lose the favours of God, because it accepts them as though they belonged to it and profits not by them as it should. And to accept them in this way and not to profit by them is to seek after them; but God gives them not that the soul may seek after them;<sup>2</sup> nor should the soul take upon itself to believe that they are of God.<sup>3</sup>

Sixthly, a readiness to accept them opens the door to the devil that he may deceive the soul by other things like to them, which he very well knows how to dissimulate and disguise, so that they may appear to be good; for, as the Apostle says, he can transform himself into an angel of light.<sup>4</sup> Of this we shall treat hereafter, by the Divine favour, in our third book, in the chapter upon spiritual gluttony.<sup>5</sup>

8. It is always<sup>6</sup> well, then, that the soul should reject these things, and close its eyes to them, whencesoever they come. For, unless it does so, it will prepare the way for those things that come from the devil, and will give him such influence that, not only will his visions come in place of God's, but his visions will begin to increase, and those of God to cease, in such manner that the devil will have all the power and God will have none. So it has happened<sup>7</sup> to many incautious and ignorant souls, who rely on these things to such an extent that many of them have found it hard to return to God in purity of faith; and many have been unable to return,<sup>8</sup> so securely has the devil rooted himself in them; for which reason it is well to resist and reject them all.<sup>9</sup> For, by the rejection of evil visions, the errors of the devil are avoided, and by the rejection of good visions no hindrance is offered to faith and the spirit harvests the fruit of them. And just as, when the soul allows them

<sup>1</sup> A here repeats the phrase above: 'because it sets . . . least important.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. endeavours to bring out the sense more clearly here: 'is to seek after them and to rest in them, and God gives them not for this.'

<sup>3</sup> St. John of the Cross means that the soul should not rely upon its own judgment in such matters but upon some discreet and learned director.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians xi, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Only Alc. and e.p. have this sentence. The 'third book' must be the *Dark Night* (I, vi).

<sup>6</sup> Alc. alone has 'always.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'that his visions will come in place of the others, as has happened . . .'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'have not returned.' This is more exact, since the backslider has always the power to return, if he so wills.

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'and fear them all.'

entrance, God begins to withhold them because the soul is becoming attached to them and is not profiting by them as it should, while the devil insinuates and increases his own visions, where he finds occasion and cause for them;<sup>1</sup> just so, when the soul is resigned, or even averse to them,<sup>2</sup> the devil begins to desist, since he sees that he is working it no harm; and contrariwise God begins to increase and magnify<sup>3</sup> His favours in a soul that is so humble and detached, making it ruler over<sup>4</sup> many things, even as He made the servant who was faithful in small things.<sup>5</sup>

9. In these favours, if the soul be faithful and humble,<sup>6</sup> the Lord will not cease until He has raised it from one step to another, even to Divine union and transformation. For Our Lord continues to prove the soul and to raise it ever higher, so that He first gives it things that are very unpretentious and exterior and in the order of sense,<sup>7</sup> in conformity with the smallness of its capacity; to the end that, when it behaves as it should, and receives these first morsels with moderation for its strength and sustenance, He may grant it further and better food. If, then, the soul conquer the devil upon the first step, it will pass to the second; and if upon the second likewise, it will pass to the third; and so onward, through all seven mansions,<sup>8</sup> which are the seven steps of love, until the Spouse shall bring it to the cellar of wine of His perfect charity.

10. Happy the soul that can fight against that beast of the Apocalypse,<sup>9</sup> which has seven heads, set over against these seven steps of love, and which makes war therewith against each one, and strives therewith against the soul in each of these mansions, wherein the soul is being exercised and is mounting step by step in the love of God. And undoubtedly if it strive faithfully against each of these heads, and gain the victory, it will deserve to pass from one step to another, and from one mansion to another, even unto the last, leaving the beast vanquished after destroying its seven heads, wherewith it made so furious a war upon it. So furious is this war that Saint John says in that place<sup>10</sup> that it was given unto the beast to make war against the saints and to be able to overcome them upon each one of these steps of love,

<sup>1</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'because the soul gives occasion for them and makes room for them.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'resigned, and has no attachment to them.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'and magnify.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'making it over.'] E.p. has: 'setting it and placing it over.'

<sup>5</sup> [*St. Matthew xxv, 21.*]

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and retired.']

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'so that He rather visits it first according to sense.'

<sup>8</sup> [The phrase is suggestive of St. Teresa, though the Spanish word is not *moradas*, but *maniones*.]

<sup>9</sup> [Apocalypse xiii, 1.]

<sup>10</sup> [Apocalypse xiii, 7.]

arraying against each one many weapons and munitions of war. And it is therefore greatly to be lamented that many who engage in this spiritual battle against the beast do not even destroy its first head by denying themselves the sensual things of the world. And, though some destroy and cut off this head, they destroy not the second head, which is that of the visions of sense whereof we are speaking. But what is most to be lamented is that some, having destroyed not only the first and the second but even the third, which is that of the interior senses,<sup>1</sup> pass out of the state of meditation, and travel still farther onward, and are overcome by this spiritual<sup>2</sup> beast at the moment of their entering into purity of spirit, for he rises up against them once more, and even his first head comes to life again, and the last state of those souls is worse than the first, since, when they fall back, the beast brings with him seven other spirits worse than himself.<sup>3</sup>

11. The spiritual person, then, has to deny himself all the apprehensions, and the temporal delights,<sup>4</sup> that belong to the outward senses, if he will destroy the first and the second head of this beast, and enter into the first chamber of love, and the second, which is of living faith,<sup>5</sup> desiring neither to lay hold upon, nor to be embarrassed by, that which is given to the senses, since it is this that derogates most from faith.<sup>6</sup>

12. It is clear, then, that these sensual apprehensions and visions cannot be a means to union, since they bear no proportion to God; and this was one of the reasons why Christ desired that the Magdalene and Saint Thomas<sup>7</sup> should not touch Him. And so the devil rejoices greatly when a soul desires to receive revelations, and when he sees it inclined to them, for he has then a great occasion and opportunity to insinuate errors and, in so far as he is able, to derogate from faith; for, as I have said, he renders the soul that desires them very gross, and at times even leads it into many temptations and unseemly ways.

13.<sup>8</sup> I have written at some length of these outward apprehensions in order to throw and shed rather more light on the others, whereof we have to treat shortly. There is so much to say on this part of my subject that I could go on and never end. I believe, however, that I

<sup>1</sup> So e.p. The other authorities [and P. Silverio] read: 'the interior sensual senses.'

<sup>2</sup> Only Alc. has 'spiritual.'

<sup>3</sup> [St. Luke xi, 26.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'and the bodily delights.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'into the first and the second chamber of love in living faith.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: '... this that is the greatest hindrance to this spiritual night of faith.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'that Mary Magdalene and the apostle Saint Thomas.'

<sup>8</sup> This paragraph is not in A or B. It is given as found in Alc.; C, D, e.p. give it with slight variants.

am summarizing it sufficiently by merely saying that the soul must take care never to receive these apprehensions, save occasionally on another person's advice, which should very rarely be given, and even then it must have no desire for them. I think that on this part of my subject what I have said is sufficient.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XII

*Which treats of natural imaginary apprehensions. Describes their nature and proves that they cannot be a proportionate means of attainment to union with God. Shows the harm which results from inability to detach oneself from them.<sup>2</sup>*

**B**EFORE we treat of the imaginary visions which are wont to occur supernaturally to the interior sense, which is the imagination and the fancy, it is fitting here, so that we may proceed in order, to treat of the natural apprehensions of this same interior bodily sense, in order that we may proceed from the lesser to the greater, and from the more exterior to the more interior, until we reach the most interior<sup>3</sup> recollection wherein the soul is united with God;<sup>4</sup> this same order we have followed up to this point. For we treated first of all the detachment of the exterior senses<sup>5</sup> from the natural apprehensions of objects,<sup>6</sup> and, in consequence, from the natural power of the desires—this was contained in the first book, wherein we spoke of the night of sense. We then began to detach these same senses from<sup>7</sup> supernatural exterior apprehensions (which, as we have just shown in the last chapter, affect the exterior senses), in order to lead the soul into the night of the spirit.

2. In this second book, the first thing that has now to be treated is the interior bodily sense—namely, the imagination and the fancy; this we must likewise void of all the imaginary apprehensions and forms

<sup>1</sup> E.p. has: '... never to receive them, save in some rare case and after close examination by a learned, spiritual and experienced person, and even then [the soul must receive them] without any desire to do so.' This is clearly an editorial attempt to clarify [and improve upon] the Saint's directions.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'in time.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the intimate'; but the superlative idea is clearly present.] Alc. has: 'the last'—probably a copyist's error [*último* for *intimo*].

<sup>4</sup> A, B omit the rest of this paragraph and the whole of the next.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'the detachment of the soul.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'of exterior objects.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: '... began the detachment in particular from ...'

that may belong to it by nature, and we must prove how impossible it is that the soul should attain to union with God until its operation cease in them, since they cannot be the proper and proximate means of this union.

3. It is to be known, then, that the senses whereof we are here particularly speaking are two interior bodily senses which are called imagination and fancy, which subserve each other in due order. For the one sense reasons, as it were, by imagining, and the other forms the imagination, or that which is imagined, by making use of the fancy.<sup>1</sup> For our purpose the discussion of the one is equivalent to that of the other, and, for this reason, when we name them not both, it must be understood that we are speaking of either, as we have here explained.<sup>2</sup> All the things, then, that these senses can receive and fashion are known as imaginations and fancies, which are forms that are represented to these senses by bodily figures and images. This can happen in two ways. The one way is supernatural, wherein representation can be made, and is made, to these senses passively, without any effort of their own; these we call imaginary visions, produced after a supernatural manner, and of these we shall speak hereafter. The other way is natural, wherein, through the ability of the soul, these things can be actively fashioned in it through its operation,<sup>3</sup> beneath forms, figures and images. And thus to these two faculties belongs meditation, which is a discursive action wrought by means of images, forms and figures that are fashioned and imagined by the said senses, as when we imagine Christ crucified, or bound to the column, or at another of the stations; or when we imagine God seated upon a throne with great majesty; or when we consider and imagine glory to be like a most beautiful light, etc.; or when we imagine all kinds of other things, whether Divine or human, that can belong to the imagination. All these imaginings<sup>4</sup> must be cast out from the soul, which will remain in darkness as far as this sense is concerned, that it may attain to Divine union; for they can bear no proportion to proximate means of union with God, any more than can the bodily imaginings, which serve as objects to the five exterior senses.

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'by fancying.'] E.p.: 'For in the one there is something of reasoning, though it is imperfect and is [produced] imperfectly, and the other forms the image, which is the imagination.'

<sup>2</sup> [The Codices omit 'that we are speaking of either,' leaving the sense uncompleted.] E.p. adds: 'that what we say of the one is applicable likewise to the other and that we are speaking of both indifferently.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'The other way is natural, when through its operation these things can be actively produced.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'All these apprehensions.'

4. The reason of this is that the imagination cannot fashion or imagine anything whatsoever beyond that which it has experienced through its exterior senses—namely, that which it has seen with the eyes, or heard with the ears, etc. At most it can only compose likenesses of those things that it has seen or heard or felt, which are of no more consequence than<sup>1</sup> those which have been received by the senses aforementioned, nor are they even of as much consequence. For, although a man imagines palaces of pearls and mountains of gold, because he has seen gold and pearls, all this is in truth less<sup>2</sup> than the essence of a little gold or of a single pearl, although in the imagination it be greater in quantity and in beauty.<sup>3</sup> And since, as has already been said, no created things can bear any proportion to the Being of God, it follows that nothing that is imagined in their likeness can serve as proximate means to union with Him, but, as we say, quite the contrary.<sup>4</sup>

5. Wherefore those that imagine God beneath any of these figures, or as a great fire or brightness, or in any other such form, and think that anything like this will be like to Him, are very far from approaching Him. For, although these considerations and forms and manners of meditation are necessary to beginners, in order that they may gradually feed and enkindle their souls with love by means of sense, as we shall say hereafter, and although they thus serve them as remote means to union with God, through which a soul has commonly to pass in order to reach the goal and abode of spiritual repose, yet they must merely pass through them, and not remain ever in them, for in such a manner they would never reach their goal, which does not resemble these remote means, neither has aught to do with them. The stairs of a staircase have naught to do with the top of it and the abode to which it leads, yet are means to the reaching of both; and if the climber left not behind the stairs below him until there were no more to climb, but desired to remain upon any one of them, he would never reach the top of them nor would he mount to the pleasant<sup>5</sup> and peaceful room which is the goal. And just so the soul that is to attain in this life to the union of that supreme repose and blessing, by means of all these stairs of meditations, forms and ideas, must pass through them and have done with them,<sup>6</sup> since they have no resemblance and bear no proportion to

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'which are of no greater excellence than . . .'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. has 'no more' for 'less.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'although in the imagination it may have the order and trace of beauty.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'but . . . contrary.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the level'—i.e., by contrast with the steep stairs.]

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'and have done with them.'

the goal to which they lead, which is God. Wherefore Saint Paul says in the Acts of the Apostles: *Non debemus aestimare, auro, vel argento, aut lapidi sculpturæ artis, et cogitationis hominis, Divinum esse similem.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: We ought not to think of the Godhead by likening Him to gold or to silver, neither to stone that is formed by art, nor to aught that a man can fashion with his imagination.

6. Great, therefore, is the error of many<sup>2</sup> spiritual persons who have practised approaching God by means of images and forms and meditations, as befits beginners. God would now lead them on to<sup>3</sup> further spiritual blessings, which are interior and invisible, by taking from them the pleasure and sweetness of discursive meditation; but they cannot, or dare not, or know not how to detach themselves from those palpable methods to which they have grown accustomed. They continually labour to retain them, desiring to proceed, as before, by the way of consideration and meditation upon forms, for they think that it must be so with them always. They labour greatly to this end and find little sweetness or none; rather the aridity and weariness and disquiet of their souls are increased and grow, in proportion as they labour for that earlier sweetness. They cannot find this in that earlier manner, for the soul no longer enjoys that food of sense, as we have said; it needs not this but another food, which is more delicate, more interior and partaking less of the nature of sense; it consists not in labouring with the imagination, but in setting the soul at rest, and allowing it to remain in its quiet and repose, which is more spiritual. For, the farther the soul progresses in spirituality, the more it ceases from the operation of the faculties in particular acts, since it becomes more and more occupied in one act that is general and pure; and thus the faculties that were journeying to a place whither the soul has arrived cease to work, even as the feet stop and cease to move when their journey is over. For if all were motion, one would never arrive, and if all were means, where or when would come the fruition of the end and goal?

7. It is piteous, then, to see many a one who,<sup>4</sup> though his soul would fain tarry in this peace and rest of interior quiet, where it is filled with the peace and refreshment of God, takes from it its tranquillity, and leads it away to the most exterior things, and would make it return and

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii, 29.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'of certain.'

<sup>3</sup> [The verb, *recoger*, of which the derived noun is translated 'recollection,' has more accurately the meaning of 'gather,' 'take inwards.']

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to see that there are many who.'] E.p. omits 'many who,' making the subject of the sentence an unspecified 'they.'

retrace the ground it has already traversed, to no purpose,<sup>1</sup> and abandon the end and goal wherein it is already reposing for the means which led it to that repose,<sup>2</sup> which are meditations. This comes not to pass without great reluctance and repugnance of the soul, which would fain be in that peace that it understands not,<sup>3</sup> as in its proper place; even as one who has arrived, with great labour, and is now resting, suffers pain if he is made to return to his labour. And, as such souls know not the mystery of this new experience, the idea comes to them that they are being idle and doing nothing; and thus they allow not themselves to be quiet, but endeavour to meditate and reason. Hence they are filled<sup>4</sup> with aridity and affliction, because they seek to find sweetness where it is no longer to be found; we may even say of them that the more they strive the less they profit,<sup>5</sup> for, the more they persist after this manner, the worse is the state wherein they find themselves, because their soul is drawn farther away from spiritual peace; and this is to leave the greater for the less, and to retrace the ground already traversed, and to seek to do that which has been done.<sup>6</sup>

8. To such as these the advice must be given to learn to abide attentively and wait lovingly upon God in that state of quiet, and to pay no heed either to imagination or to its working; for here, as we say, the faculties are at rest, and are working, not actively, but passively, by receiving that which God works in them; and, if they work at times, it is not with violence<sup>7</sup> or with carefully elaborated meditation, but with sweetness of love, moved less by the ability of the soul itself than by God, as will be explained hereafter. But let this now suffice to show how fitting and necessary it is for those who aim at making further progress to be able to detach themselves from all these methods and manners and works of the imagination at the time and season when the profit of the state which they have reached demands and requires it.

9. And, that it may be understood how this is to be, and at what season, we shall give in the chapter following<sup>8</sup> certain signs which the

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'to no purpose.'

<sup>2</sup> [P. Silverio prints a *él*—'to Him'; but he now agrees with me that a *à*—'to it,' i.e., the repose just mentioned—is the correct reading.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'that it understands not.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'Hence comes it that they are filled' [using a stronger word for 'filled', with the sense of 'stuffed,' 'swollen'].

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'the more they freeze, the more they bind' [a popular saying].

<sup>6</sup> Alc. omits: 'and to . . . been done,' probably only by an oversight.

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: ' . . . and work not, save in that simple and sweet loving attentiveness; and if at times they work more [than this] it is not with violence . . . ' The reading in the text is that of Alc.

<sup>8</sup> Only Alc. and e.p. have: 'in the chapter following.'

spiritual person will see in himself and whereby he may know at what time and season he may freely avail himself of the goal mentioned above, and may cease from journeying by means of meditation and the work of the imagination.

## CHAPTER XIII

*Wherein are set down the signs which the spiritual person will find in himself whereby he may know at what season it behoves him to leave meditation and reasoning and pass to the state of contemplation.*<sup>1</sup>

**I**N order that there may be no confusion in this instruction it will be meet in this chapter to explain at what time and season it behoves the spiritual person to lay aside the task of discursive meditation as carried on through the imaginations and forms and figures above mentioned, in order that he may lay them aside neither sooner nor later than when the Spirit<sup>2</sup> bids him; for, although it is meet for him to lay them aside at the proper time in order that he may journey to God and not be hindered by them, it is no less needful for him not to lay aside the said imaginative meditation before the proper time lest he should turn backward. For, although the apprehensions of these faculties serve not as proximate means of union to the proficient, they serve nevertheless as remote means to beginners in order to dispose and habituate<sup>3</sup> the spirit to spirituality by means of sense, and in order to void the sense, in the meantime, of all the other low forms and images, temporal, worldly and natural. We shall therefore speak here of certain signs and examples which the spiritual person will find in himself, whereby he may know whether or not it will be meet for him to lay them aside at this season.<sup>4</sup>

2. The first sign is his realization that he can no longer meditate or reason<sup>5</sup> with his imagination, neither can take pleasure therein as he was wont to do aforetime; he rather finds aridity in that which aforetime

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'Sets down the signs which the spiritual person may recognize in himself, in order that he may begin to detach the understanding from the imaginary forms and reasonings of meditation.'

<sup>2</sup> [The MSS. and editions, including P. Silverio, have 'spirit,' but P. Silverio agrees with me that the correct reading is 'Spirit.']

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'and habilitate.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B add here: 'The signs which the spiritual person will observe in himself for laying aside discursive meditation are three.' Alc., C, D add none of these words. E.p. adds only: 'which [signs] are three.'

<sup>5</sup> A, e.p.: 'or work.'

was wont to captivate his senses and to bring him sweetness. But, for as long as he finds sweetness in meditation,<sup>1</sup> and is able to reason, he should not abandon this, save when his soul is led into the peace and quietness<sup>2</sup> which is described under the third head.

3. The second sign is a realization that he has no desire to fix his meditation or his sense upon other particular objects, exterior or interior. I do not mean that the imagination neither comes nor goes (for even at times of deep<sup>3</sup> recollection it is apt to move freely), but that the soul has no pleasure in fixing it of set purpose upon other objects.

4. The third and surest sign is that the soul takes pleasure in being alone, and waits with loving attentiveness upon God, without making any particular meditation, in inward peace and quietness and rest, and without acts and exercises of the faculties—memory, understanding and will—at least, without discursive acts, that is, without passing from one thing to another; the soul is alone, with an attentiveness and a knowledge, general and loving, as we said, but without any particular understanding, and adverting not to that which it is contemplating.<sup>4</sup>

5. These three signs, at least, the spiritual person must observe in himself, all together, before he can venture safely to abandon the state of meditation and sense,<sup>5</sup> and to enter that of contemplation and spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Alc. [and P. Silverio]: 'as he extracts sweetness from meditation.' A, B, C, D, e.p. have 'finds.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and quietness.' The Saint's description of this first sign at which a soul should pass from meditation to contemplation was denounced as disagreeing with Catholic doctrine, particularly the phrase: 'that he can no longer meditate or reason with his imagination, neither can take pleasure therein as he was wont to do aforetime.' This language, however, is common to mystics and theologians, not excluding St. Thomas (2a 2æ, q. 180, a. 6) and Suárez (*De Oratione*, Bk. II, Chap. x), as is proved, with eloquence and erudition, by P. Basilio Ponce de León and the *Elucidatio*, in their refutations of the Saint's critics. All agree that, in the act of contemplation of which St. John of the Cross here speaks, the understanding must be stripped of forms and species of the imagination and that the reasonings and reflections of meditation must be set aside. This is to be understood, both of the contemplation that transcends all human methods, and also of that which is practised according to these human methods with the ordinary aid of grace. But there is this important difference, that those who enjoy the first kind of contemplation set aside all intellectual reasoning as well as processes of the fancy and the imagination, whereas, for the second kind, reasoning *prior* to the act of contemplation is normally necessary, though it ceases *at* the act of contemplation, and there is then substituted for it simple and loving intuition of eternal truth. It should be clearly understood that this is not of habitual occurrence in the contemplative soul, but occurs only *during the act* of contemplation, which is commonly of short duration. St. Teresa makes this clear in Chap. xxvii of her *Life*, and treats this same doctrinal question in many other parts of her works—e.g., *Life*, Chaps. x, xii; *Way of Perfection*, Chap. xxvi; *Interior Castle*, IV, Chap. iii, etc.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'much.']

<sup>4</sup> Only Alc., B, C, D have: 'and adverting . . . it is contemplating.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and sense.' Since sense plays so great a part in meditation, St. John of the Cross places it in contradistinction to contemplation, which, the more nearly it attains perfection, becomes the more sublime and spiritual and the more completely freed from the bonds of nature. Cf. *Elucidatio*, Pt. II, Chap. iii, p. 180.

6. And it suffices not for a man to have the first alone without the second, for it might be that the reason for his being unable to imagine and meditate upon the things of God, as he did aforetime, was distraction on his part and lack of diligence;<sup>1</sup> for the which cause he must observe in himself the second likewise, which is the absence of inclination or desire to think upon other things; for, when the inability to fix the imagination and sense upon the things of God proceeds from distraction or lukewarmness, the soul then has the desire and inclination to fix it upon other and different things, which lead it thence altogether. Neither does it suffice that he should observe in himself the first and second signs, if he observe not likewise, together with these, the third; for, although he observe his inability to reason and think upon the things of God, and likewise his distaste for thinking upon other and different things, this might proceed from melancholy or from some other kind of humour in the brain or the heart, which habitually produces a certain absorption and suspension of the senses, causing the soul to think not at all, nor to desire or be inclined to think, but rather to remain in that pleasant state of reverie.<sup>2</sup> Against this must be set the third sign, which is loving attentiveness and knowledge, in peace, etc., as we have said.

7. It is true, however, that, when this condition first begins, the soul is hardly aware of this loving knowledge, and that for two reasons. First, this loving knowledge is apt at the beginning to be very subtle and delicate, and almost imperceptible to the senses. Secondly, when the soul has been accustomed to that other exercise of meditation, which is wholly<sup>3</sup> perceptible, it is unaware, and hardly conscious, of this other new and imperceptible condition, which is purely spiritual; especially when, not understanding it, the soul allows not itself to rest in it, but strives after the former, which is more readily perceptible; so that abundant though the loving interior peace may be, the soul has no opportunity of experiencing and enjoying it. But the more accustomed the soul grows to this,<sup>4</sup> by allowing itself to rest, the more it will grow therein and the more conscious it will become of that loving general knowledge of God, in which it has greater enjoyment than in aught else, since this knowledge causes it peace, rest, pleasure and delight without labour.

8. And, to the end that what has been said may be the clearer, we

<sup>1</sup> A, B, C: 'and lack of recollectedness.'

<sup>2</sup> [*embelesamiento*, a word denoting a pleasurable condition somewhere between a reverie and a swoon.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'which is more.'

<sup>4</sup> A, e.p.: 'becomes habilitated for this.'

shall give, in this chapter following, the causes and reasons why the three signs aforementioned appear to be necessary for the soul that is journeying to pure spirit.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XIV

*Wherein is proved the fitness of these signs, and the reason is given why that which has been said in speaking of them is necessary to progress.*

WITH respect to the first sign whereof we are speaking—that is to say, that the spiritual person who would enter upon the spiritual road<sup>2</sup> (which is that of contemplation) must leave the way of imagination and of meditation through sense when he takes no more pleasure therein and is unable to reason—there are two reasons why this should be done, which may almost be comprised in one. The first is, that in one way the soul has received all the spiritual good which it would be able to derive from the things of God by the path of meditation and reasoning, the sign whereof is that it can no longer meditate or reason as before,<sup>3</sup> and finds no new sweetness or pleasure therein as it found before, because up to that time it had not progressed<sup>4</sup> as far as the spirituality which was in store for it; for, as a rule, whensoever the soul receives some spiritual blessing, it receives it with pleasure, at least in spirit, in that means whereby it receives it and profits by it; otherwise it is astonishing if it profits by it, or finds in the cause of it that help and that sweetness which it finds when it receives it.<sup>5</sup> For this is in agreement with a saying of the philosophers, *Quod sapit, nutrit*. That is: That which is palatable nourishes and fattens. Wherefore holy Job said: *Numquid poterit comedi insulsum, quod non est sale conditum?*<sup>6</sup> Can that which is unsavoury perchance be eaten when it is not seasoned with salt? It is for this cause that the soul is unable to meditate or reason as before: the little pleasure which the spirit finds therein and the little profit which it gains.

2. The second reason is that the soul at this season has now both the substance and the habit of the spirit of meditation. For it must be known that the end of reasoning and meditation on the things of God

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'appear to be necessary in order to journey to spirit.'] E.p.: 'in order to guide the spirit.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'spiritual life.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'as it was wont to do before.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: '... pleasure therein as before, because before this it had not progressed ...'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'or finds ... receives it.'

<sup>6</sup> Job vi, 6.

is the gaining of some knowledge and love of God, and each time that the soul gains this through meditation,<sup>1</sup> it is an act; and just as many acts, of whatever kind, end by forming a habit in the soul, just so, many of these acts of loving knowledge which the soul has been making one after another from time to time come through repetition to be so continuous in it that they become habitual. This end God is wont also to effect in many souls without the intervention of these acts<sup>2</sup> (or at least without many such acts having preceded it), by setting them at once in contemplation.<sup>3</sup> And thus that which aforesaid the soul was gaining gradually through its labour of meditation upon particular facts has now through practice, as we have been saying, become converted and changed into a habit and substance of loving knowledge, of a general kind, and not distinct or particular as before. Wherefore, when it gives itself to prayer, the soul is now like one to whom water has been brought, so that he drinks peacefully, without labour, and is no longer forced to draw the water through the aqueducts of past meditations and forms and figures.<sup>4</sup> So that, as soon as the soul comes before God, it makes an act of knowledge, confused, loving, passive and tranquil, wherein it drinks of wisdom and love and delight.

3. And it is for this cause that the soul feels great weariness and distaste, when, although it is in this condition of tranquillity, men try to make it meditate and labour in particular acts of knowledge. For it is like a child, which, while receiving the milk that has been collected and brought together for it in the breast, is taken from the breast and then forced to try to gain and collect food by its own diligent squeezing and handling. Or it is like one who has removed the rind from a fruit, and is tasting the substance of the fruit, when he is forced to cease doing this and to try to begin removing the said<sup>5</sup> rind, which has been removed already. He finds no rind to remove, and yet he is unable to enjoy the substance of the fruit which he already had in his hand; herein he is like to one who leaves a prize<sup>6</sup> which he holds for another which he holds not.

4. And many act thus when they begin to enter this state; they think that the whole business consists in a continual reasoning and learning to understand particular things by means of images and forms,

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'through meditation.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'This God is wont to do likewise without the intervention of these acts of meditation.'

<sup>3</sup> A adds: 'and love.'

<sup>4</sup> [Cf. the simile of the Waters in St. Teresa, *Life*, Chap. xi, and *Interior Castle*, IV, ii, iii.]

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'the same.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'booty,' 'prey.']

which are to the spirit as rind. When they find not these in that substantial and loving quiet wherein their soul desires to remain, and wherein it understands nothing clearly, they think that they are going astray and wasting time, and they begin once more to seek the rind of their imaginings and reasonings,<sup>1</sup> but find it not, because it has already been removed. And thus they neither enjoy the substance nor make progress in meditation, and they become troubled by the thought that they are turning backward and are losing themselves. They are indeed losing themselves,<sup>2</sup> though not in the way they think, for they are becoming lost to their own senses and to their first manner of perception;<sup>3</sup> and this means gain in that spirituality which is being given them. The less they understand, however, the farther they penetrate into the night of the spirit, whereof we are treating in this book, through the which night they must pass in order to be united with God, in a union that transcends all knowledge.

5. With respect to the second sign, there is little to say, for it is clear that at this season the soul cannot possibly take pleasure in other and different objects of the imagination, which are of the world, since, as we have said, and for the reasons already mentioned, it has no pleasure in those which are in closest conformity with it—namely, those of God. Only, as has been noted above, the imaginative faculty in this state of recollection is in the habit of coming and going and varying of its own accord; but neither according to the pleasure nor at the will of the soul, which is troubled thereby, because its peace and joy are disturbed.

6. Nor do I think it necessary to say anything here concerning the fitness and necessity of the third sign whereby the soul may know if it is to leave the meditation aforementioned, which is a knowledge of God or a general and loving attentiveness to Him. For something has been said of this in treating of the first sign, and we shall treat of it again hereafter, when we speak in its proper place of this confused and general knowledge, which will come after our description of all the particular apprehensions of the understanding. But we will speak<sup>4</sup> of one reason alone by which it may clearly be seen how, when the contemplative has to turn aside from the way of meditation and reasoning, he needs this general and loving attentiveness or knowledge of God. The reason is that, if the soul at that time had not this knowledge of God or this realization of His presence, the result would be that it

<sup>1</sup> A: 'the rind of reasoning.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'and understanding.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'And they are indeed doing so.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'will now speak.'

would do nothing and have nothing; for, having turned aside from meditation (by means whereof the soul has been reasoning with its faculties of sense), and being still without contemplation, which is the general knowledge whereof we are speaking,<sup>1</sup> wherein the soul makes use of its spiritual faculties<sup>2</sup>—namely, memory, understanding and will—these being united in this knowledge which is then wrought and received in them, the soul<sup>3</sup> would of necessity be without any exercise in the things of God, since the soul can neither work, nor can it receive<sup>4</sup> that which has been worked in it, save only by way of these two kinds of faculty,<sup>5</sup> that of sense and that of spirit. For, as we have said, by means of the faculties of sense it can reason and search out and gain knowledge of things and by means of the spiritual faculties it can have fruition of the knowledge<sup>6</sup> which it has already received in these faculties aforementioned, though the faculties themselves take no part herein.<sup>7</sup>

7. And thus the difference between the operation of these two kinds of faculty in the soul is like the difference between working and enjoying the fruit of work which has been done; or like that between the labour of journeying and the rest and quiet which comes from arrival at the goal; or, again, like that between preparing a meal and partaking and tasting of it, when it has been both prepared and masticated, without having any of the labour of cooking it, or it is like the difference between receiving something and profiting by that which has been received.<sup>8</sup> Now if the soul be occupied neither with respect to the operation<sup>9</sup> of the faculties of sense, which is meditation and reasoning, nor with respect to that which has already been received and effected in the spiritual faculties, which is<sup>10</sup> the contemplation and knowledge whereof we have spoken, it will have no occupation, but will be wholly idle, and there would be no way in which it could be said to be

<sup>1</sup> B: 'whereof we were speaking.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the soul keeps in act its spiritual faculties.'] B reads: 'the soul has present spiritual faculties.' [The difference in the Spanish between this reading and that of the text is very slight and might be due to a careless copyist.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'the soul'; [as a result, the clause may be interpreted impersonally, but the general sense is the same].

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'nor can it continue in.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B: 'of these two faculties.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'the object of the knowledge.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'with labour, search or reasoning.'

<sup>8</sup> So Alc., but the other Codices and e.p. place this last clause after 'has been done' above.

<sup>9</sup> E.p. omits 'and masticated' and the following clauses, continuing thus: '... [been prepared]. And if it be not occupied in any kind of exercise, whether it have respect to the operation ... or ...'

<sup>10</sup> E.p. omits: 'in the spiritual faculties, which is.'

employed. This knowledge, then, is needful for the abandonment of the way of meditation and reasoning.

8. But here it must be made clear that this general knowledge whereof we are speaking is at times so subtle and delicate, particularly when it is most pure and simple and perfect, most spiritual and most interior, that, although the soul be occupied therein, it can neither realize it nor perceive it. This is most frequently the case when we can say that it is in itself most clear, perfect and simple; and this comes to pass when it penetrates a soul that is unusually pure and far withdrawn from other particular kinds of knowledge and intelligence, which the understanding or the senses might fasten upon. Such a soul, since it no longer has those things wherein the understanding and the senses have the habit and custom of occupying themselves, is not conscious of them, inasmuch as it has not its accustomed powers of sense. And it is for this reason that, when this knowledge is purest and simplest and most perfect, the understanding is least conscious of it and thinks of it as most obscure. And similarly, in contrary wise, when it<sup>1</sup> is in itself least pure and simple in the understanding, it seems to the understanding to be clearest and of the greatest importance, since it is clothed in, mingled with or involved in certain intelligible forms which understanding or sense<sup>2</sup> may seize upon.<sup>3</sup>

9. This will be clearly understood by the following comparison. If we consider a ray of sunlight entering through a window, we see that, the more the said ray is charged with atoms and particles of matter, the more palpable, visible and bright it appears to the eye of sense;<sup>4</sup> yet it is clear that the ray is in itself least pure, clear, simple and perfect at that time, since it is full of so many particles and atoms. And we see likewise that, when it is purest and freest from those particles and atoms, the least palpable and the darkest<sup>5</sup> does it appear to the material eye; and the purer it is, the darker and less apprehensible it appears to it. And if the ray were completely pure and free from all these atoms and particles, even from the minutest specks of dust, it would appear completely dark and invisible<sup>6</sup> to the eye, since everything that could be seen would be absent from it—namely, the objects

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'when this knowledge.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'or sense.'

<sup>3</sup> [The verb is *tropear en*, which may mean either 'stumble upon'—i.e., 'come across (and make use of),' or 'stumble over'—i.e., the forms may be a stumbling-block, or a snare. I think there is at least a suggestion of the latter meaning.]

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to the sight of sense.'] E.p. has: 'to the sense of sight.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'and the least pure.'

<sup>6</sup> All the MSS. have 'incomprehensible.' E.p. reads 'imperceptible' and [says P. Silverio] rightly so.

of sight. For the eye would find no objects whereon to rest, since light is no proper<sup>1</sup> object of vision, but the means whereby that which is visible is seen; so that, if there be no visible objects wherein the sun's ray or any light can be reflected, nothing will be seen. Wherefore, if the ray of light entered by one window and went out by another, without meeting anything that has material form, it would not<sup>2</sup> be seen at all; yet, notwithstanding, that ray of light would be purer and clearer in itself than when it was more clearly seen and perceived through being full of visible objects.

10. The same thing happens in the realm of spiritual light with respect to the sight of the soul, which is the understanding, and which this general<sup>3</sup> and supernatural knowledge and light whereof we are speaking strikes so purely and simply. So completely is it detached and removed from all intelligible forms, which are objects<sup>4</sup> of the understanding, that it is neither perceived nor observed. Rather, at times (that is, when it is purest), it becomes darkness, because it withdraws the understanding from its accustomed lights, from forms and from fancies, and then the darkness is more clearly felt and realized. But, when this Divine light strikes the soul with less force, it neither perceives darkness nor observes light, nor apprehends aught that it knows,<sup>5</sup> from whatever source; hence at times the soul remains as it were in a great forgetfulness, so that it knows not where it has been<sup>6</sup> or what it has done, nor is it aware of the passage of time. Wherefore it may happen, and does happen, that many hours are spent in this forgetfulness, and, when the soul returns to itself, it believes that less than a moment has passed, or no time at all.<sup>7</sup>

11. The cause of this forgetfulness is the purity and simplicity of this knowledge which occupies the soul<sup>8</sup> and simplifies, purifies and cleanses it from all apprehensions and forms of the senses and of the memory, through which it acted when it was conscious of time,<sup>9</sup> and thus leaves it in forgetfulness and without consciousness of time.<sup>10</sup> This prayer, therefore, seems to the soul extremely brief, although, as

<sup>1</sup> A, B: 'no visible.' E.p.: 'since simple and pure light is not as properly an object of vision as a means whereby,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'it seems that it would not.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'general and.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'which are proportionate objects.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. begins this sentence thus: 'At other times, too, this Divine light strikes the soul with such force that it neither perceives darkness, nor observes light, neither does it seem to apprehend aught that it knows.'

<sup>6</sup> A, B: 'has entered.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits: 'or no time at all.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. adds: 'being itself clear and pure.'

<sup>9</sup> [Or: 'when it was dependent on time.' *Lit.*, 'acted in time.']

<sup>10</sup> [Or: 'and independent of time.' *Lit.*, 'without time.'] E.p.: 'without noticing differences of time.'

we say,<sup>1</sup> it may last for a long period; for the soul has been united<sup>2</sup> in pure intelligence, which belongs not to time; and this is the brief prayer which is said to pierce the heavens, because it is brief and because it belongs not to time.<sup>3</sup> And it pierces the heavens, because the soul is united in heavenly intelligence; and when the soul awakens, this knowledge leaves in it the effects which it created in it without its being conscious of them, which effects are the lifting up of the spirit to the heavenly intelligence, and its withdrawal and abstraction from all things and forms and figures and memories thereof. It is this that David describes as having happened to him when he returned to himself out of this same forgetfulness, saying: *Vigilavi, et factus sum sicut passer solitarius in tecto*.<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: I have watched and I have become like the lonely bird<sup>5</sup> on the house-top. He uses the word 'lonely' to indicate that he was withdrawn and abstracted from all things. And by the house-top he means the elevation of the spirit on high; so that the soul remains as though ignorant of all things, for it knows God only, without knowing how. Wherefore the Bride declares in the Songs that among the effects which that sleep and forgetfulness of hers produced was this unknowing. She says that she came down to the garden, saying: *Nescivi*.<sup>6</sup> That is: I knew not whence. Although, as we have said, the soul in this state of knowledge believes itself to be doing nothing, and to be entirely unoccupied, because it is working neither with the senses nor with the faculties, it should realize that it is not wasting time.<sup>7</sup> For, although the harmony of the faculties of the soul may cease, its intelligence is as we have said. For this cause the Bride, who

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'as I have said.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits 'united.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. modifies these lines thus: '. . . it has been in pure intelligence, which is the brief prayer that is said to pierce the heavens. Because it is brief and because the soul is not conscious or observant of time.' P. José de Jesús María comments thus upon this passage: 'In contemplation the soul withdraws itself from the seashore, and entirely loses sight of land, in order to whelm itself in that vast sea and impenetrable abyss of the Divine Essence; hiding itself in the region of time, it enters within the most extensive limits of eternity. For the pure and simple intelligence whereinto the soul is brought in this contemplation, as was pointed out by the ancient Dionysius (*Myst. Theol.*, Chap. ii), and by our own Father, is not subject to time. For, as St. Thomas says (Pt. I, q. 118, a. 3, *et alibi*), the soul is a spiritual substance, which is above time and superior to the movements of the heavens, to which it is subject only because of the body. And therefore it seems that, when the soul withdraws from the body, and from all created things, and by means of pure intelligence whelms itself in eternal things, it recovers its natural dominion and rises above time, if not according to substance, at least according to its most perfect being; for the noblest and most perfect being of the soul resides rather in its acts than in its faculties. Wherefore St. Gregory said (*Morals*, Bk. VIII): "The Saints enter eternity even in this life, beholding the eternity of God."'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm ci, 8 [A.V. ci, 7].

<sup>5</sup> [The Spanish *pájaro*, 'bird,' is derived from *passer*, 'sparrow.']

<sup>6</sup> Canticles vi, 11.

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'nor acting uselessly.'

was wise, answered this question herself in the Songs, saying: *Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat*.<sup>1</sup> As though she were to say: Although I sleep with respect to my natural self, ceasing to labour, my heart waketh, being supernaturally lifted up in supernatural knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

12. But, it must be realized, we are not to suppose that this knowledge necessarily causes this forgetfulness when the soul is in the state that we are here describing: this occurs only when<sup>3</sup> God suspends in the soul the exercise of all its faculties, both natural and spiritual, which happens very seldom,<sup>4</sup> for this knowledge does not always fill the soul entirely. It is sufficient for the purpose, in the case which we are treating, that the understanding should be withdrawn from all particular knowledge, whether temporal or spiritual, and that the will should not desire to think with respect to either, as we have said, for this is a sign that the soul is occupied.<sup>5</sup> And it must be taken as an indication that this is so<sup>6</sup> when this knowledge is applied and communicated to the understanding only, which sometimes happens when the soul is unable to observe it. For, when it is communicated to the will also, which happens almost invariably, the soul does not cease to understand in the very least degree, if it will reflect hereon, that it is employed and occupied in this knowledge, inasmuch as it is conscious of a sweetness of love therein, without particular knowledge or understanding of that which it loves. It is for this reason that this knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Canticles v, 2.

<sup>2</sup> The words which conclude this paragraph in the edition of 1630 ('The sign by which we may know if the soul is occupied in this secret intelligence is if it is seen to have no pleasure in thinking of aught, whether high or low') are not found either in the Codices or in e.p. When St. John of the Cross uses the words 'cessation,' 'idleness' [*ocio*, Lat. *otium*], 'quiet,' 'annihilation,' 'sleep' (of the faculties), etc., he does not mean, as the Illuminists did, that the understanding and will in the act of contemplation are so passive as to have lost all their force and vitality, and that the contemplative is therefore impeccable, although he commit the grossest sins. The soul's vital powers, according to St. John of the Cross, are involved even in the highest contemplation; the understanding is attentive to God and the will is loving Him. They are not working, it is true, in the way which is usual and natural with them—that is, by reason and imagination—but supernaturally, through the unction of the Holy Spirit, which they receive passively, without any effort of their own. It is in this sense that such words as those quoted above ('cessation,' 'idleness,' etc.) are both expressively and appropriately used by the Saint, for what is done without labour and effort may better be described by images of passivity than by those of activity. Further, the soul is unaware that its faculties are working in this sublime contemplation, though they undoubtedly do work.

St. John of the Cross, philosopher as well as mystic, would not deny the vital and intrinsic activity of the understanding and the will in contemplation. His reasoning is supported by P. José de Jesús María (*Apología Mística de la Contemplación Divina*, Chap. ix) [quoted at length by P. Silverio, *Obras*, etc., Vol. II, p. 130, note].

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'when in a particular way.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. abbreviates: '... suspends the soul, and this happens very seldom.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'for this ... occupied.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'it must be taken to show that the soul is in this forgetfulness.'

is described as general and loving; for, just as it is so in the understanding, being communicated to it obscurely, even so is it in the will, sweetness and love being communicated to it confusedly, so that it cannot have a distinct knowledge of the object of its love.

13. Let this suffice now to explain how meet it is that the soul should be occupied in this knowledge, so that it may turn aside from the way of spiritual<sup>1</sup> meditation, and be sure that, although it seem to be doing nothing, it is well occupied, if it discern within itself these signs. It will also be realized, from the comparison which we have made, that if this light presents itself to the understanding in a more comprehensible and palpable manner, as the sun's ray presents itself to the eye when it is full of particles, the soul must not for that reason consider it purer, brighter and more sublime. It is clear that, as Aristotle and the theologians say,<sup>2</sup> the higher and more sublime is the Divine light, the darker is it to our understanding.

14. Of this Divine knowledge there is much to say, concerning both itself and the effects which it produces upon contemplatives. All this we reserve for its proper place,<sup>3</sup> for, although we have spoken of it here, there would be no reason for having done so at such length, save our desire not<sup>4</sup> to leave this doctrine rather more confused than it is already, for I confess it is certainly very much so. Not only is it a matter which is seldom treated in this way, either verbally or in writing, being in itself so extraordinary and obscure, but my rude style and lack of knowledge make it more so. Further, since I have misgivings as to my ability to explain it, I believe I often write at too great length and go beyond the limits which are necessary for that part of the doctrine which I am treating.<sup>5</sup> Herein I confess that I sometimes err purposely; for that which is not explicable by one kind of reasoning will perhaps be better understood by another, or by others yet; and I believe, too, that in this way I am shedding more light upon that which is to be said hereafter.

15. Wherefore it seems well to me also, before completing this part of my treatise, to set down a reply<sup>6</sup> to one question which may arise with respect to the continuance of this knowledge, and this shall be briefly treated<sup>7</sup> in the chapter following.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits 'spiritual.'

<sup>2</sup> A, B omit: 'as . . . say.'

<sup>3</sup> In spite of this promise, the Saint does not return to this subject at such length as his language here would suggest.

<sup>4</sup> Alc., B omit 'not,' which, however, is required by the context.

<sup>5</sup> A, B omit the rest of this paragraph.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'not to fail to reply.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'and this I will do.'

## CHAPTER XV

*Wherein is explained how it is sometimes well for progressives who are beginning to enter upon this general knowledge of contemplation to make use of natural<sup>1</sup> reasoning and the work of the natural faculties.*

WITH regard to that which has been said, there might be raised one question—if progressives (that is, those whom God is beginning to bring into this supernatural knowledge of contemplation whereof we have spoken) must never again, because of this that they are beginning to experience, return to the way of meditation and reasoning and natural forms. To this the answer is that it is not to be understood that such as are beginning to experience this loving knowledge must, as a general rule, never again try to return to meditation;<sup>2</sup> for, when they are first making progress in proficiency, the habit of contemplation is not yet so perfect that they can give themselves to the act thereof whensoever they wish, nor, in the same way, have they reached a point so far beyond meditation that they cannot occasionally meditate and reason in a natural way,<sup>3</sup> as they were wont, using the figures and the steps that they were wont to use,<sup>4</sup> and finding something new in them. Rather, in these early stages, when, by means of the indications already given, they are able to see that the soul is not occupied in that repose and knowledge, they will need to make use of meditation until by means of it they come to acquire in some degree of perfection the habit which we have described. This will happen when, as soon as they seek to meditate, they experience this knowledge and peace, and find themselves unable to meditate and no longer desirous of doing so, as we have said. For until they reach this stage, which is that of the proficient in this exercise, they use sometimes the one and sometimes the other, at different times.<sup>5</sup>

2. The soul, then, will frequently find itself in this loving or peaceful state of waiting upon God<sup>6</sup> without in any way exercising its faculties—that is, with respect to particular acts—and without working actively at all, but only receiving.<sup>7</sup> In order to reach this state, it will

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits 'natural.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'this loving and simple knowledge must never meditate again or strive to do so.'

<sup>3</sup> Alc. alone has: 'in a natural way.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'using . . . to use.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'at different times.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'in this loving or peaceful presence,' the original of 'presence' having also the sense of 'attendance.']

<sup>7</sup> The words: 'that is . . . only receiving' occur only in Alc. E.p. substitutes: 'as has been explained.'

frequently need to make use of meditation, quietly and in moderation; but, when once the soul is brought into this other state,<sup>1</sup> it acts not at all with its faculties,<sup>2</sup> as we have already said. It would be truer to say that understanding and sweetness work in it and are wrought within it, than that the soul itself works at all, save only by waiting upon God and by loving Him without desiring to feel or to see anything.<sup>3</sup> Then God communicates Himself to it passively, even as to one who has his eyes open, so that light is communicated to him passively, without his doing more than keep them open.<sup>4</sup> And this reception of light which is infused supernaturally is passive understanding. We say that the soul works not at all, not because it understands not, but because it understands things without taxing its own industry and receives only that which is given to it, as comes to pass in the illuminations and enlightenments or inspirations of God.<sup>5</sup>

3. Although in this condition the will freely receives this general and confused knowledge of God, it is needful, in order that it may receive this Divine light more simply and abundantly, only that it should not try to interpose other lights which are more palpable, whether forms or ideas or figures having to do with any kind of meditation; for none of these things is similar to that pure and serene light. So that if at this time the will desires to understand and consider particular things, however spiritual they be, this would obstruct the pure and simple general light<sup>6</sup> of the spirit, by setting those clouds in the way; even as a man might set something before his eyes which impeded his vision and kept from him both the light and the sight of things in front of him.

4. Hence it clearly follows, that, when the soul has completely purified and voided itself of all forms and images that can be apprehended, it will remain in this pure and simple light, being transformed therein into a state of perfection. For, though this light never fails in the soul,<sup>7</sup> it is not infused into it because of the creature forms and veils wherewith the soul is veiled and embarrassed; but, if these impediments and these veils were wholly removed (as will be said hereafter),

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'when once this [other state] is attained.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'the soul neither reflects nor labours with its faculties.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'save only to let itself be carried away by God.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. abbreviates: '... his eyes open, light is communicated.'

<sup>5</sup> This passage ('And this reception ... inspirations of God') together with the first clause of the next paragraph ('Although ... knowledge of God') is found only in Alc.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'this would obstruct the subtle and simple light.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. reads: 'For, though this light is always made ready to be communicated to the soul.'

the soul would then find itself in a condition of pure detachment and poverty of spirit, and, being simple and pure, would be transformed into simple and pure Wisdom, which is the Son of God. For the enamoured soul finds that that which is natural has failed it, and it is then imbued with that which is Divine, both naturally and supernaturally, so that there may be no vacuum in its nature.<sup>1</sup>

5. When the spiritual person cannot meditate, let him learn to be still in God, fixing his loving attention upon Him, in the calm of his understanding, although he may think himself to be doing nothing. For thus, little by little and very quickly, Divine calm and peace will be infused into his soul, together with a wondrous and sublime knowledge of God, enfolded in Divine love. And let him not meddle with forms, meditations and imaginings, or with any kind of reasoning, lest his soul be disturbed, and brought out of its contentment and peace, which can only result in its experiencing distaste and repugnance. And if, as we have said, such a person has scruples that he is doing nothing, let him note that he is doing no small thing by pacifying the soul and bringing it into calm and peace, unaccompanied by any act or desire, for it is this that Our Lord asks of us, through David, saying: *Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus*.<sup>2</sup> As though he had said: Learn to be empty of all things (that is to say, inwardly and outwardly<sup>3</sup>) and you will see<sup>4</sup> that I am God.

## CHAPTER XVI

*Which treats of the imaginary apprehensions that are supernaturally represented in the fancy. Describes how they cannot serve the soul as a proximate means to union with God.*

Now that we have treated of the apprehensions which the soul can receive within itself by natural means, and whereon the fancy and the imagination can work by means of reflection,<sup>5</sup> it will be suitable to treat here of the supernatural apprehensions, which are called imaginary visions, which likewise belong to these senses,

<sup>1</sup> C, D: 'for no vacuum occurs in nature.' E.p.: 'it is imbued with that which is Divine, supernaturally, for God leaves no vacuum without filling it.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xlv, 11 [A.V., xlv, 10].

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'and outwardly.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds: 'with delight.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'and whereon it can work by means of the fancy and the imagination.'

since they come within the category of images, forms and figures, exactly<sup>1</sup> as do the natural apprehensions.

2. It must be understood that beneath this term 'imaginary vision' we purpose to include all things which can be represented to the imagination supernaturally by means of any image, form, figure and species.<sup>2</sup> For all the apprehensions and species which, through all the five bodily senses, are represented to the soul, and dwell within it, after a natural manner, may likewise occur in the soul after a supernatural manner, and be represented to it without any assistance of the outward senses. For this sense of fancy, together with memory, is, as it were, an archive and storehouse of the understanding, wherein are received all forms and images that can be understood; and thus the soul has them within itself as it were in a mirror, having received them by means of the five senses, or, as we say, supernaturally; and thus it presents them to the understanding, whereupon the understanding considers them and judges them. And not only so, but the soul can also prepare and imagine others like to those with which it is acquainted.<sup>3</sup>

3. It must be understood, then, that, even as the five outward senses represent<sup>4</sup> the images and species of their objects to these inward senses, even so, supernaturally, as we say, without using the outward senses, both God and the devil can represent<sup>5</sup> the same images and species, and much more beautiful<sup>6</sup> and perfect ones. Wherefore, beneath these images, God often represents many things to the soul, and teaches it much wisdom; this is continually seen in the Scriptures, as when *Isaia*s saw God in His glory<sup>7</sup> beneath the smoke which covered the Temple, and beneath the seraphim who covered their faces and their feet with their wings;<sup>8</sup> and as *Jeremias* saw the rod watching,<sup>9</sup> and *Daniel* a multitude of visions,<sup>10</sup> etc. And the devil, too, strives to deceive the soul with his visions, which in appearance are good, as may be seen in the Book of the Kings, when he deceived all the prophets of

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits 'exactly.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. here adds a passage which is found in none of the Codices: 'and this with species that are very perfect and that [have power to] make representations and cause influences more vivid and more perfect than [any brought about] through the con-natural order of the senses.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. abbreviates: '. . . and images which it has to make intelligible, and thus the understanding beholds and judges them.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'propose and represent.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. has (for 'both . . . represent'): 'may be represented.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'more vivid.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'as when God showed His glory.'

<sup>8</sup> *Isaia*s vi, 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Jeremias* i, 11.

<sup>10</sup> *Daniel* vii, 10.

Achab, presenting to their imaginations the horns wherewith he said the King was to destroy the Assyrians, which was a lie.<sup>1</sup> Even such were the visions of Pilate's wife, warning him not to condemn Christ;<sup>2</sup> and there are many other places where it is seen how, in this mirror of the fancy and the imagination,<sup>3</sup> these imaginary visions come more frequently to proficients than do outward and bodily visions. These, as we say, differ not in their nature (that is, as being images and species) from those which enter by the outward senses; but, with respect to the effect which they produce, and in the degree of their perfection, there is a great difference; for imaginary visions are subtler and produce a deeper impression upon the soul, inasmuch as they are supernatural, and are also more interior than the exterior supernatural visions. Nevertheless, it is true that some of these exterior bodily visions may produce a deeper impression; the communication, after all, is as God wills. We are speaking, however, merely as concerns their nature, and in this respect they are more spiritual.<sup>4</sup>

4. It is to these senses of imagination and fancy that the devil habitually betakes himself with his wiles—now natural, now supernatural;<sup>5</sup> for they are the door and entrance to the soul, and here, as we have said,<sup>6</sup> the understanding comes to take up or set down its goods, as it were in a harbour or in a store-house where it keeps its provisions. And for this reason it is hither that both God and the devil always come with their jewels of supernatural forms and images,<sup>7</sup> to offer them to the understanding; although God does not make use of this means alone to instruct the soul, but dwells within it in substance, and is able to do this by Himself and by other methods.

5. There is no need for me to stop here in order to give instruction concerning the signs by which it may be known which visions are of God and which not, and which are of one kind and which of another; for this is not my intention, which is only to instruct the understanding herein, that it may not be hindered or impeded as to union with Divine Wisdom by the good visions, neither may be deceived by those which are false.

6. I say, then, that with regard to all these imaginary visions and apprehensions and to all other forms and species whatsoever, which

<sup>1</sup> 3 Kings xxii, 11 [A.V., 1 Kings xxii, 11].

<sup>2</sup> [St. Matthew xxvii, 19.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p. has only: 'and [in] many other places.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'more interior.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'now natural, now supernatural.' The Saint employs this last word, in this passage, with the sense of 'preternatural.' Only God can transcend the bounds of nature, but the devil can act in such a way that he appears to be doing so, counterfeiting miracles, and so forth.

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'as we have said.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'come hither with images and forms.'

present themselves beneath some particular kind of knowledge or image or form, whether they be false and come from the devil or are recognized as true and coming from God, the understanding must not be embarrassed by them or feed upon them, neither must the soul desire to receive them or to have them,<sup>1</sup> lest it should no longer be detached, free, pure and simple, without any mode or manner, as is required for union.<sup>2</sup>

7. The reason of this is that all these forms which we have already mentioned are always represented, in the apprehension of the soul, as we have said, beneath certain modes and manners which have limitations; and that the Wisdom of God, wherewith the understanding is to be united, has no mode or manner, neither is it contained within any particular or distinct kind of intelligence or limit, because it is wholly pure and simple. And as, in order that these two extremes may be united—namely, the soul and Divine Wisdom—it will be necessary for them to attain to agreement, by means of a certain mutual resemblance,<sup>3</sup> hence it follows that the soul must be pure and simple, neither bounded by, nor attached to, any particular kind of intelligence, nor modified by any limitation of form, species and image. As God comes not within<sup>4</sup> any image or form, neither is contained within any particular kind of intelligence, so the soul, in order to reach God,<sup>5</sup> must likewise come within no distinct form or kind of intelligence.

8. And that there is no form or likeness in God is clearly declared by the Holy Spirit in Deuteronomy, where He says: *Vocem verborum ejus audistis, et formam penitus non vidistis.*<sup>6</sup> Which signifies: Ye heard the voice of His words, and ye saw in God no form whatsoever. But He says that there was darkness there, and clouds and thick darkness, which are the confused and dark knowledge whereof we have spoken, wherein the soul is united with God. And afterwards He says further: *Non vidistis aliquam similitudinem in die, qua locutus est vobis Dominus in Horeb de medio ignis.* That is: Ye saw no likeness in God upon the day when He spoke to you on Mount Horeb, out of the midst of the fire.<sup>7</sup>

9. And that the soul cannot reach the height of God,<sup>8</sup> even as far as is possible in this life, by means of any form and figure, is declared likewise by the same Holy Spirit in the Book of Numbers, where God

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'or to set its foot upon them.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'for Divine union.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'by a certain manner of resemblance.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'As God is not contained within.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to come within God.'] E.p.: 'to be united with God.'

<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy iv, 12.

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy iv, 15.

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'cannot reach the summit of union with God.'

reproves Aaron and Miriam, the brother and sister of Moses, because they murmured against him, and, desiring to convey to them the loftiness of the state of union and friendship with Him wherein He had placed him, said: *Si quis inter vos fuerit Propheta Domini, in visione apparebo ei, vel per somnium loquar ad illum. At non talis servus meus Moyses, qui in omni domo mea fidelissimus est: ore enim ad os loquor ei, et palem, et non per ænigmata, et figuras Dominum videt.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: If there be any prophet of the Lord among you, I will appear to him in some vision or form, or I will speak with him in his dreams; but there is none like My servant Moses, who is the most faithful in all My house, and I speak with him mouth to mouth, and he sees not God by comparisons, similitudes and figures. Herein He says clearly that, in this lofty state of union whereof we are speaking, God is not communicated to the soul by means of any disguise of imaginary vision or similitude or form, neither can He be so communicated; but mouth to mouth—that is, in the naked and pure essence of God, which is the mouth of God in love, with the naked and pure essence of the soul,<sup>2</sup> which is the mouth of the soul in love of God.

10. Wherefore, in order to come to this essential union of love in God,<sup>3</sup> the soul must have a care not to lean upon<sup>4</sup> imaginary visions, nor upon forms or figures or particular objects of the understanding; for these cannot serve it as a proportionate and proximate means to such an end; rather they would disturb it, and for this reason the soul must renounce them and strive not to have them. For if in any circumstances they were to be received and prized, it would be for the sake of the profit which true visions bring to the soul and the good effect which they produce upon it. But, for this to happen, it is not necessary to receive them;<sup>5</sup> indeed, for the soul's profit, it is well always to reject them. For these imaginary visions, like the outward bodily visions whereof we have spoken, do the soul good by communicating to it intelligence or love or sweetness; but for this effect to be produced by them in the soul it is not necessary that it should desire to receive them; for, as has also been said above, at this very time<sup>6</sup> when they are present to the imagination, they produce in the soul and infuse into it

<sup>1</sup> Numbers xii, 6–8. [D.V. has 'Mary' for 'Miriam'.]

<sup>2</sup> The editions of 1630 and later dates add here: 'by means of the will.' But these words are found neither in e.p. nor in the Codices.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'to this so perfect union of God.'

<sup>4</sup> [The progressive form is used in the Spanish: 'not to go (or 'be') leaning upon.']

<sup>5</sup> A, B: 'but it is necessary, for this to happen, not to admit them.' The second part of this sentence shows that the reading of the text, which is that of both Alc. and e.p., is the correct one.

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'at this very time.'

intelligence and love, or sweetness, or whatever effect God wills them to produce. And not only do they produce this joint effect, but principally, although not simultaneously, they produce their effect in the soul passively,<sup>1</sup> without its being able to hinder this effect, even if it so desired,<sup>2</sup> just as it was also powerless to acquire it, although it had been able previously to prepare itself.<sup>3</sup> For, even as the window is powerless<sup>4</sup> to impede the ray of sunlight which strikes it, but, when it is prepared by being cleansed, receives its light passively without any diligence or labour on its own part, even so the soul, although against its will,<sup>5</sup> cannot fail to receive in itself the influences and communications of those figures, however much it might desire to resist them.<sup>6</sup> For the will that is negatively inclined cannot, if coupled with loving and humble resignation, resist supernatural infusions; only the impurity and imperfections of the soul can resist them<sup>7</sup> even as the stains upon a window impede the brightness of the sunlight.<sup>8</sup>

11. From this it is evident that, when the soul completely detaches itself, in its will and affection, from the apprehensions of the stains of those forms, images and figures wherein are clothed<sup>9</sup> the spiritual communications which we have described, not only is it not deprived of these communications and the blessings which they cause within it, but it is much better prepared to receive them with greater abundance, clearness, liberty of spirit and simplicity, when all these apprehensions are set on one side, for they are, as it were, curtains and veils covering the spiritual thing<sup>10</sup> that is behind them. And thus, if the soul desire to feed upon them, they occupy spirit and sense in such a way that the spirit cannot communicate itself simply and freely; for, while they are still occupied with the outer rind, it is clear that the understanding is not free to receive the substance.<sup>11</sup> Wherefore, if the soul at that time desires to receive these forms and to set store by them, it

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'And thus the soul receives their quickening effect passively.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'even if it so desired.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. substitutes for this last clause: 'notwithstanding its having laboured previously to prepare itself.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'To some extent it resembles a window, which is powerless . . .'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'although against its will.' <sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'however . . . resist them.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'For the will cannot resist supernatural infusions, although without doubt the impurity and imperfections of the soul are an obstruction.'

<sup>8</sup> [*Lit.*, 'impede the brightness.']

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'from the stains of the apprehensions, images and figures wherein are clothed.' A: 'from the apprehensions and the stains of them and the affections wherein are clothed.' B: 'from the apprehensions of the stains of those forms and figures wherein are clothed.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: 'the more spiritual thing.'

<sup>11</sup> This is the reading of e.p. A, B [followed by P. Silverio] read: 'to receive those forms.' Alc. reads merely: 'to receive.'

would be embarrassing itself, and contenting itself with the least important part of them—namely, all that it can apprehend and know of them, which is the form and image and particular object of the understanding in question. The most important part of them, which is the spiritual part that is infused into the soul, it can neither apprehend nor understand, nor can it even know what it is, or be able to express it, since it is purely spiritual. All that it can know of them, as we say, according to its manner of understanding, is but the least part of what is in them—namely, the forms perceptible by sense. For this reason I say that what it cannot understand or imagine is communicated to it by these visions, passively, without any effort of its own to understand and without its even knowing how to make such an effort.

12. Wherefore the eyes of the soul must ever be withdrawn from all these apprehensions which it can see and understand distinctly, which are communicated through sense, and do not make for a foundation of faith, or for reliance on faith, and must be set upon that which it sees not, and which belongs not to sense, but to spirit, which can be expressed by no figure of sense; and it is this which leads the soul to union in faith, which is the true medium, as has been said. And thus these visions will profit the soul substantially, in respect of faith, when it is able completely to renounce the sensible and intelligible part<sup>1</sup> of them, and to make good use of the purpose for which God gives them to the soul, by casting them aside; for, as we said of corporeal visions, God gives them not so that the soul may desire to have them and to set its affection upon them.

13. But there arises here this question: If it be true that God gives the soul supernatural visions, but not so that it may desire to have them or be attached to them or set store by them, why does He give them at all, since by their means the soul may fall into many errors and perils, or at the least may find in them such hindrances to further progress as are here described, especially since God can come to the soul, and communicate to it, spiritually and substantially, that which He communicates to it through sense, by means of the sensible forms and visions aforementioned?

14. We shall answer this question in the following chapter:<sup>2</sup> it involves important teaching, most necessary, as I see it, both to spiritual persons and to those who instruct them. For herein is taught the way and purpose of God with respect to these visions, which many know

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'the particular intelligible part.'

<sup>2</sup> The words 'in the following chapter' occur in Alc. and e.p. only.

not, so that they cannot rule themselves or guide themselves to union, neither can they guide others to union, through these visions. For they think that, just because they know them to be true and to come from God, it is well to receive them and to trust them,<sup>1</sup> not realizing that the soul will become attached to them, cling to them and be hindered by them, as it will by things of the world, if it know not how to renounce these as well as those. And thus they think it well to receive one kind of vision and to reject another, causing themselves, and the souls under their care, great labour and peril in discerning between the truth and the falsehood of these visions. But God does not command them to undertake this labour, nor does He desire that sincere and simple souls should be led into this conflict and danger; for they have safe and sound teaching, which is that of the faith, wherein they can go forward.

15. This, however, cannot be unless they close their eyes to all that is of particular and clear intelligence and sense. For, although Saint Peter was quite certain of that vision of glory which he saw in Christ at the Transfiguration, yet, after having described it in his second canonical Epistle, he desired not that it should be taken for an important and sure testimony, but rather directed his hearers to faith, saying: *Et habemus firmiorem propheticum sermonem: cui benefacitis attendentes, quasi lucernæ lucenti in caliginoso loco, donec dies elucescat.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: And we have a surer testimony than this vision of Tabor—namely, the sayings and words of the prophets who bear testimony to Christ, whereunto ye must indeed cling, as to a candle which gives light in a dark place. If we will think upon this comparison, we shall find therein the teaching which we are now expounding. For, in telling us to look to the faith whereof the prophets spake, as to a candle that shines in a dark place, he is bidding us remain in the darkness, with our eyes closed to all these other lights; and telling us that in this darkness, faith alone, which likewise is dark, will be the light to which we shall cling; for if we desire to cling to these other bright lights—namely, to distinct objects of the understanding—we cease to cling to that dark light, which is faith, and we no longer have that light in the dark place whereof Saint Peter speaks. This place, which here signifies the understanding, which is the candlestick wherein this candle of faith is set, must be dark until the day when the clear vision of God dawns upon it in the life to come, or, in this life, until the day of transformation and union with God to which the soul is journeying.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'it is well to lean on them and cleave to them.'

<sup>2</sup> 2 St. Peter i, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Alc. ends the chapter with the words: 'transformation and union.' E.p. has 'with Him' for 'with God.'

## CHAPTER XVII

*Wherein is described the purpose and manner of God in His communication of spiritual blessings to the soul by means of the senses. Herein is answered the question which has been referred to.*

THERE is much to be said concerning the purpose of God, and concerning the manner wherein He gives these visions in order to raise up the soul from its lowly estate to His Divine union. All spiritual books deal with this and in this treatise of ours the method which we pursue is to explain it;<sup>1</sup> therefore I shall only say in this chapter as much as is necessary to answer our question, which was as follows: Since in these supernatural visions there is so much hindrance and peril to progress, as we have said, why does God, Who is most wise and desires to remove stumbling-blocks and snares from the soul, offer and communicate them to it?

2. In order to answer this, it is well first of all to set down three fundamental points.<sup>2</sup> The first is from Saint Paul *ad Romanos*, where he says: *Quæ autem sunt, a Deo ordinatæ sunt.*<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: The works that are done are ordained of God. The second is from the Holy Spirit in the Book of Wisdom, where He says: *Disponit omnia suaviter.*<sup>4</sup> And this is as though He had said: The wisdom of God, although it extends from one end to another—that is to say, from one extreme to another—orders all things with sweetness. The third is from the theologians, who say that *Omnia movet secundum modum eorum.* That is, God moves all things according to their nature.

3. It is clear, then, from these fundamental points, that if God is to move the soul and to raise it up from the extreme depth of its lowness to the extreme height of His loftiness, in Divine union with Him, He must do it with order and sweetness and according to the nature of the soul itself. Then, since the order<sup>5</sup> whereby the soul acquires knowledge is through forms and images of created things, and the natural way wherein it acquires this knowledge and wisdom is through the senses, it follows that, if God is to raise up the soul to supreme knowledge, and to do so with sweetness, He must begin to work from the lowest and extreme end of the senses of the soul, in order that He may gradually

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'and in this treatise . . . to explain it.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'to take for granted three principles.'

<sup>3</sup> Romans xiii, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Wisdom viii, 1.

<sup>5</sup> B: 'since the method and order.' ['Method' is the *modo* translated above as 'nature.']

lead it,<sup>1</sup> according to its own nature, to the other extreme of His spiritual wisdom, which belongs not to sense. Wherefore He first leads it onward by instructing it through forms, images and ways of sense, according to its own method of understanding, now naturally, now supernaturally, and by means of reasoning, to this supreme Spirit of God.

4. It is for this reason that God gives the soul visions and forms, images and other kinds of sensible and intelligible knowledge of a spiritual nature;<sup>2</sup> not that God would not give it spiritual wisdom<sup>3</sup> immediately, and all at once, if the two extremes—which are human and Divine, sense and spirit—could in the ordinary way concur and unite in one single act, without the previous intervention of many other preparatory acts which concur among themselves in order and sweetness, and are a basis and a preparation one for another, like natural agents; so that the first acts serve the second, the second the third, and so onward, in exactly the same way.<sup>4</sup> And thus God brings man to perfection according to the way of man's own nature, working from what is lowest and most exterior up to what is most interior and highest. First, then, He perfects his bodily senses, impelling him to make use of good things which are natural, perfect and exterior, such as hearing sermons and masses, looking on holy things, mortifying the palate at meals and chastening the sense of touch by penance and holy rigour. And, when these senses are in some degree prepared, He is wont to perfect them still further, by bestowing on them certain supernatural favours and gifts, in order to confirm them the more completely in that which is good, offering them certain supernatural communications, such as visions of saints or holy things, in corporeal shape, the sweetest perfumes, locutions, and exceeding great delights of touch, wherewith<sup>5</sup> sense is greatly confirmed in virtue and is withdrawn from a desire for evil things. And besides this He continues at the same time to perfect the interior bodily senses, whereof we are here treating, such as imagination and fancy, and to habituate<sup>6</sup> them to that which is good, by means of considerations, meditations, and reflections of a sacred kind, in all of which He is instructing the spirit. And, when these are prepared by this natural exercise, God is wont to

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'may gradually raise it.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'of a spiritual nature.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'spiritual substance.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. modifies: '... preparation one for another; even as with natural agents the first serve the second, the second the third, and so onward.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: locutions, together with pure and singular sweetness, wherewith ...'

<sup>6</sup> A, B: 'and to habituate.'

enlighten and spiritualize them still more by means of certain supernatural visions, which are those that we are here calling imaginary; wherein, as we have said, the spirit, at the same time, profits greatly, for both kinds of vision help to take away its grossness and gradually to reform it. And after this manner God continues to lead the soul step by step till it reaches that which is the most interior of all; not that it is always<sup>1</sup> necessary for Him to observe this order, and to cause the soul to advance exactly in this way, from the first step to the last; sometimes He allows the soul to attain one stage and not another, or leads it from the more interior to the less, or effects two stages of progress together. This happens when God sees it to be meet for the soul, or when He desires to grant it His favours in this way;<sup>2</sup> nevertheless His ordinary method is as has been said.

5. It is in this way, then, that God instructs<sup>3</sup> the soul and makes it more spiritual, communicating spirituality to it first of all by means of outward and palpable things, adapted to sense, on account of the soul's feebleness and incapacity, so that, by means of the outer husk of those things of sense which in themselves are good, the spirit may make<sup>4</sup> particular acts and receive so many spiritual communications<sup>5</sup> that it may form a habit as to things spiritual, and may acquire actual and substantial spirituality,<sup>6</sup> which is completely removed from every sense. To this, as we have said, the soul cannot attain except very gradually, and in its own way—that is, by means of sense—to which it has ever been attached.<sup>7</sup> And thus, in proportion as the spirit attains more nearly to converse with God, it becomes ever more detached and emptied of the ways of sense, which are those of imaginary meditation and reflection. Wherefore, when the soul attains perfectly to spiritual converse with God, it must of necessity have been voided of all that relates to God and yet might come under the head of sense. Even so, the more closely a thing grows attracted to one extreme, the farther removed and withdrawn<sup>8</sup> it becomes from the other; and, when it comes to rest perfectly in the one, it will also have withdrawn itself

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits 'always.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... and not another, when He sees that it so befits the soul and desires to grant it favours in this way.'

<sup>3</sup> [The verb is progressive ('goes (on) instructing').] A, B, e.p. add: 'ordinarily.'

<sup>4</sup> [This verb also is progressive: 'may go (on) making.']

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'mouthfuls of spiritual communication.' Cf. p. 135, n. 2, below.]

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'may acquire the most substantial of the spirit' [i.e., the most substantial spirituality].

<sup>7</sup> A, B add: 'and has come near.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'may be and rejected.' [All the verbs in these last two clauses are in the progressive form.]

perfectly from the other. Wherefore there is a commonly quoted spiritual adage which says: *Gustato spiritu, desipit omnis caro*. Which signifies: After the taste and sweetness of the spirit have been experienced, everything carnal is insipid.<sup>1</sup> That is: No profit or enjoyment is afforded by all the ways of the flesh,<sup>2</sup> wherein is included all communication of sense with the spiritual. And this is clear: for, if it is spirit, it has no more to do with sense; and, if sense can comprehend it, it is no longer pure spirit. For, the more can be known of it by natural apprehension and sense, the less it has of spirit and of the supernatural, as has been explained above.

6. The spirit<sup>3</sup> that has become perfect, therefore, pays no heed to sense, nor does it receive anything through sense, nor make any great use of it, neither does it need to do so, in its relations with God, as it did aforetime when it had not grown spiritually. It is this that is signified by that passage from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians which says: *Cum essem parvulus, loquebar ut parvulus, sapiebam ut parvulus, cogitabam ut parvulus. Quando autem factus sum vir, evacuavi quæ erant parvuli*.<sup>4</sup> This signifies: When I was a child, I spake as a child, I knew as a child, I thought as a child; but, when I became a man, I put away<sup>5</sup> childish things. We have already explained how the things of sense, and the knowledge that spirit can derive<sup>6</sup> from them, are the business of a child. Thus, if the soul should desire to cling to them for ever, and not to throw them aside, it would never be aught but a little child; it would speak ever of God as a child, and would know of God as a child, and would think of God as a child;<sup>7</sup> for, clinging to the outer husk of sense, which pertains to the child, it would never attain to the substance of the spirit, which pertains to the perfect man. And thus the soul must not desire to receive the said revelations in order to continue in growth, even though God offer them to it, just as the child must leave the breast in order to accustom its palate to strong meat, which is more substantial.

7. You will ask, then, if, when the soul is immature, it must take these things, and, when it is grown, must abandon them; even as an infant must take the breast, in order to nourish itself, until it be older and can leave it. I answer that, with respect to meditation and natural reflection by means of which the soul begins to seek God, it is true that

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'is tasteless.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'all the tastes or roads of sense.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'the spiritual man.'

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 11.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'I emptied.'] A, B, e.p.: 'I voided.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'that can be derived.'

<sup>7</sup> A, B: 'it would never be aught but a little child; it would ever speak of, know and think of God as a child.'

it must not leave the breast of sense in order to continue taking in nourishment until the time and season to leave it have arrived, and this comes when God brings the soul into a more spiritual communion, which is contemplation, concerning which we gave instruction in the eleventh chapter of this book.<sup>1</sup> But, when it is a question of imaginary visions, or other supernatural apprehensions, which can enter the senses without the co-operation of man's free will, I say that at no time and season must it receive them,<sup>2</sup> whether the soul be in the state of perfection, or whether in a state less perfect—not even though they come from God. And this for two reasons. The first is that, as we have said, He produces His effect in the soul,<sup>3</sup> without its being able to hinder it, although, as often happens, it can and may hinder visions;<sup>4</sup> and consequently that effect<sup>5</sup> which was to be produced in the soul is communicated to it much more substantially, although not after that manner. For, as we said likewise, the soul cannot hinder the blessings that God desires to communicate to it, since it is not in the soul's power to do so, save when it has some imperfection and attachment; and there is neither imperfection nor attachment in renouncing these things with humility and misgiving.<sup>6</sup> The second reason is that the soul may free itself from the peril and effort inherent in discerning between evil visions and good, and in deciding whether an angel be of light or of darkness. This effort brings the soul no advantage; it merely wastes its time, and hinders it, and becomes to it an occasion of many imperfections and of failure to make progress. The soul concerns not itself, in such a case, with what is important, nor frees itself of trifles in the shape of apprehensions and perceptions of some particular kind. This has already been said in the discussion of corporeal visions; and more will be said on the subject hereafter.

8. Let it be believed, too, that, if Our Lord were not about to lead the soul in a way befitting its own nature, as we say here, He would never communicate to it the abundance of His Spirit through these

<sup>1</sup> In reality, this instruction is given in Chap. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'must it seek them, or remain for long in them.'

<sup>3</sup> So Alc. The other MSS. and e.p. read: '... that, as we have said, they produce their effect passively in the soul.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. has: 'although it do something to hinder the manner of the vision,' and omits: 'as often happens.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'that second effect.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits the passage: 'For, as we said likewise . . . and attachment,' and substitutes for 'and there . . . misgiving': 'For, in renouncing these things with humility and misgiving, there is neither imperfection nor attachment.' The Codices end the sentence at the word 'misgiving,' but e.p. continues: 'but rather disinterestedness and emptiness, which is the best preparation for union with God.'

aqueducts, which are so narrow—these forms and figures and particular perceptions—by means whereof He gives the soul enlightenment by crumbs. For this cause David says: *Mittit crystallum suam sicut buccellas*.<sup>1</sup> Which is as much as to say: He sent His wisdom to the souls as in morsels.<sup>2</sup> It is greatly to be lamented that, though the soul has infinite capacity,<sup>3</sup> it should be given its food by morsels conveyed through the senses, by reason of the small degree of its spirituality and its incapacitation by sense. Saint Paul was also grieved by this lack of preparation and this incapability of men for receiving the Spirit, when he wrote to the Corinthians, saying: 'I, brethren, when I came to you, could not speak to you as to spiritual persons, but as to carnal; for ye could not receive it, neither can ye now.' *Tamquam parvulis in Christo lac potum vobis dedi, non escam*.<sup>4</sup> That is: I have given you milk to drink, as to infants in Christ, and not solid food to eat.<sup>5</sup>

9. It now remains, then, to be pointed out that the soul must not allow its eyes to rest upon that outer husk—namely, figures and objects set before it supernaturally. These may be presented to the exterior senses, as are locutions and words audible to the ear; or, to the eyes, visions of saints, and of beauteous radiance; or perfumes to the sense of smell; or tastes and sweetnesses to the palate; or other delights to the touch, which are wont to proceed from the spirit, a thing that very commonly happens to spiritual persons.<sup>6</sup> Or the soul may have to avert its eyes from visions of interior sense, such as imaginary<sup>7</sup> visions, all of which it must renounce entirely. It must set its eyes only upon the spiritual good which they produce, striving to preserve it in its works and to practise that which is for the due<sup>8</sup> service of God, paying no heed to those representations nor desiring any pleasure of sense. And in this way the soul takes from these things only that which God intends and wills—namely, the spirit of devotion—for there is no other important purpose for which He gives them; and it casts aside that which He would not give if these gifts could be received in the spirit without it,<sup>9</sup> as we have said—namely, the exercise and apprehension of the senses.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxlvii, 17.

<sup>2</sup> C, D: 'as morsels.' [*Lit.*, 'mouthfuls.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'has as it were infinite capacity.' All the MSS. have the reading of the text.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians iii, 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'in Christ' and 'to eat.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'a thing . . . persons.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'interior imaginary.'

<sup>8</sup> So Alc., C, D. A, B, e.p. read 'naked' [i.e., 'pure'] for 'due.'

<sup>9</sup> The remainder of the sentence is omitted in Alc.

## CHAPTER XVIII

*Which treats of the harm that certain spiritual masters may do to souls when they direct them not by a good method with respect to the visions aforementioned. Describes also how these visions may cause deception even though they be of God.*

IN this matter of visions we cannot be as brief as we should desire, since there is so much to say about them. Although in substance we have said what is relevant in order to explain to the spiritual person how he is to behave with regard to the visions aforementioned, and to the master who directs him, the way in which he is to deal with his disciple,<sup>1</sup> yet it will not be superfluous to go into somewhat greater detail about this doctrine, and to give more enlightenment as to the harm which can ensue, either to spiritual souls or to the masters who direct them, if they are over-credulous about them, although they be of God.

2. The reason which has now moved me to write at length about this is the lack of discretion, as I understand it, which I have observed in certain spiritual masters. Trusting to these supernatural apprehensions, and believing that they are good and come from God, both masters and disciples have fallen into great error and found themselves in dire straits, wherein is fulfilled the saying of Our Saviour: *Si cæcus cæco ducatum præstet, ambo in foveam cadunt.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: If a blind man lead another blind man, both fall into the pit. And He says not 'shall fall,' but 'fall.' For they may fall without falling into error, since the very venturing of the one to guide the other is a going astray, and thus they fall in this respect alone,<sup>3</sup> at the very least. And, first of all, there are some whose way and method with souls that experience these visions cause them to stray, or embarrass them with respect to their visions, or guide them not along the road of humility, but encourage them to fix their eyes upon them in some way (for which reason they remain without the true spirit of faith<sup>4</sup>) and edify them not in faith, but lead them to speak highly of those things.<sup>5</sup> By doing

<sup>1</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'concerning them.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew xv, 14.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits 'alone.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'for which reason they journey not by way of the pure and perfect spirit of faith.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'and edify them not, neither fortify them in it [i.e., in faith], making these things of great account.'

this they make them realize that they themselves set some value upon them, or<sup>1</sup> make great account of them, and, consequently, their disciples do the same. Thus their souls have been set upon these apprehensions, instead of being edified in faith, so that they may be empty and detached, and freed from those things and can soar to the heights of dark faith. All this arises from the terms and language which the soul observes its master to employ with respect to these apprehensions; somehow it very easily develops a satisfaction and an esteem for them, which is not in its own control, and which averts its eyes from the abyss of faith.

3. And the reason why this is so easy must be that the soul is so greatly occupied with these things of sense that, as it is inclined to them by nature, and is likewise disposed to enjoy the apprehension of distinct and sensible things, it has only to observe in its confessor, or in some other person, a certain esteem and appreciation for them, and not merely will it at once conceive the same itself, but also, without its realizing the fact, its desire will become lured away by them, so that it will feed upon them and will be ever more inclined toward them and will set a certain value<sup>2</sup> upon them. And hence arise many imperfections, at the very least; for the soul is no longer as humble as before, but thinks that all this is of some importance and productive of good, and that it is itself esteemed by God, and that He is pleased and somewhat satisfied with it, which is contrary to humility. And thereupon the devil secretly sets about increasing this, without the soul's realizing it, and begins to suggest ideas to it about others, as to whether they have these things or have them not, or are this or are that; which is contrary to holy simplicity and spiritual solitude.

4. There is much more to be said about these evils, and of how such souls, unless they withdraw themselves, grow not in faith, and also of how there are other evils of the same kind which, although they be not so palpable and recognizable<sup>3</sup> as these, are subtler and more hateful in the Divine eyes, and which result from not living in complete detachment. Let us, however, leave this subject now,<sup>4</sup> until we come to treat of the vice of spiritual gluttony<sup>5</sup> and of the other six vices, whereof, with the help of God,<sup>6</sup> many things will be said, concerning these subtle

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'set some value upon them, or.'

<sup>2</sup> So all the MSS. E.p. alters to 'much value' [bringing out the general sense of the passage by the change].

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'and recognizable.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits 'complete' and reads: 'We shall leave' for 'Let us leave.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B omit the remainder of the paragraph.

<sup>6</sup> E.p. has: 'God willing.'

and delicate stains which adhere to the spirit when its director cannot guide it in detachment.

5. Let us now say something of this manner wherein certain confessors deal with souls, and instruct them ill. And of a truth I could wish that I knew how to describe it, for I realize that it is a difficult thing to explain how the spirit of the disciple grows in conformity with that of his spiritual father, in a hidden and secret way; and this matter is so tedious that it wearies me,<sup>1</sup> for it seems impossible to speak of the one thing without describing the other also, as they are spiritual things, and the one corresponds with the other.

6. But it is sufficient to say here that<sup>2</sup> I believe, if the spiritual father has an inclination toward revelations of such a kind that they mean something to him,<sup>3</sup> or satisfy or delight his soul, it is impossible but that he will impress that delight and that aim<sup>4</sup> upon the spirit of his disciple, even without realizing it, unless the disciple be more advanced than he; and, even in this latter case, he may well do him grievous harm if he continue with him. For, from that inclination of the spiritual father toward such visions, and the pleasure which he takes in them, there arises a certain kind of esteem for them, of which, unless he watch it carefully, he cannot fail to communicate some indication or impression to other persons; and if any other such person is like-minded and has a similar inclination, it is impossible, as I understand, but that there will be communicated from the one to the other a readiness to apprehend these things and a great esteem for them.

7. But we need not now go into detail about this. Let us speak of the confessor who, whether or no he be inclined toward these things, has not the prudence that he ought to have in disencumbering the soul of his disciple and detaching his desire from them, but begins to speak to him about these visions and devotes the greater part of his spiritual conversation to them, as we have said, giving him signs by which he may distinguish good visions from evil. Now, although it is well to know this, there is no reason for him to involve the soul in such labour, anxiety and peril.<sup>5</sup> By paying no heed<sup>6</sup> to visions, and refusing to receive them, all this is prevented, and the soul acts as it should. Nor is this all, for such confessors, when they see that their penitents

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'and this . . . wearies me.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits this phrase. A, B have: 'And, treating of that which I promised.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'that they have much weight with him.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'that same pleasure and esteem.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. adds: 'save in a case of stringent necessity, as has been said.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'By paying little heed.'

are receiving visions from God, beg them to entreat God to reveal them to themselves also, or to say such and such things to them, with respect to themselves or to others, and the foolish souls<sup>1</sup> do so, thinking that it is lawful to desire knowledge by this means. For they suppose that, because God is pleased to reveal or say something by supernatural means, in His own way or for His own purpose, it is lawful for them to desire Him to reveal it to them, and even to entreat Him to do so.

8. And, if it come to pass that God answers their petition and reveals it, they become more confident, thinking that, because God answers them, it is His will and pleasure to do so; whereas, in reality, it is neither God's will nor His pleasure. And they frequently act or believe according to that which He has revealed to them, or according to the way wherein He has answered them; for, as they are attached to that manner of communion with God, the revelation makes a great impression upon them and their will acquiesces in it. They take a natural pleasure in their own way of thinking and therefore naturally acquiesce in it; and frequently they go astray.<sup>2</sup> Then they see that something happens in a way they had not expected; and they marvel, and then begin to doubt if the thing were of God,<sup>3</sup> since it happens not, and they see it not, according to their expectations. At the beginning they thought two things: first, that the vision was of God, since at the beginning it agreed so well with their disposition, and their natural inclination to that kind of thing may well have been the cause of this agreement, as we have said; and secondly that, being of God, it would turn out as they thought or expected.

9. And herein lies a great delusion, for revelations or locutions which are of God do not always turn out as men expect or as they imagine inwardly. And thus they must never be believed or trusted blindly, even though they are known to be revelations or answers or sayings of God. For, although they may in themselves be certain and true, they are not always so<sup>4</sup> in their causes, and according to our

<sup>1</sup> All the MSS. have this reading, but the editor of *e.p.* evidently disliked the exact and expressive phrase, for he substituted 'good souls' for it.

<sup>2</sup> *E.p.* abbreviates: '... they become more confident about other occasions and think that this manner of communion with God is His pleasure, whereas, in truth, it is neither His pleasure nor His will. And, as they are attached to that manner of communion with God, the revelation makes a great impression upon them, and their will acquiesces naturally in it. For, as they take a natural pleasure in their own way of thinking, they naturally acquiesce in it, and they frequently go astray in what they say.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'if it were of God.'] *E.p.*: 'if they were of God or no.' *A.*: 'if it were of God or were not God [*sic*].' *B.*: 'if it were of God or were not of God.'

<sup>4</sup> *E.p.* adds: 'of necessity' and omits 'in their causes.'

manner of understanding,<sup>1</sup> as we shall prove in the chapter following. And afterwards we shall further say and prove that, although God sometimes gives a supernatural answer to that which is asked of Him, it is not His pleasure to do so, and sometimes, although He answers, He is angered.

## CHAPTER XIX

*Wherein is expounded and proved how, although visions and locutions which come from God are true,<sup>2</sup> we may be deceived about them. This is proved by quotations from Divine Scripture.<sup>3</sup>*

FOR two reasons we have said that, although visions and locutions which come from God are true, and in themselves are always certain, they are not always so with respect to ourselves. One reason is the defective way in which we understand them; and the other, the variety of their causes.<sup>4</sup> In the first place, it is clear that they are not always as they seem, nor do they turn out as they appear to our manner of thinking. The reason for this is that, since God is vast and boundless, He is wont, in His prophecies, locutions and revelations, to employ ways, concepts and methods of seeing things which differ greatly from such purpose and method as can normally be understood by ourselves; and these are the truer and the more certain the less they seem so to us. This we constantly see in the Scriptures. To many of the ancients many prophecies and locutions of God came not to pass as they expected, because they understood them after their own manner, in the wrong way, and quite literally. This will be clearly seen in these passages.

2. In Genesis, God said to Abraham, when He had brought him to the land of the Chanaanites: *Tibi dabo terram hanc.*<sup>5</sup> Which signifies, I will give thee this land. And when He had said it to him many times, and Abraham was by now very old, and He had never given it to him, though He had said this to him, Abraham answered God once again

<sup>1</sup> A, B end the chapter here.

<sup>2</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'in themselves.'

<sup>3</sup> This sentence is omitted in A, B.

<sup>4</sup> E.p. amplifies thus: '... always certain, they are not always so in our understanding. One reason is the defective way in which we understand them; and the other is the causes and foundations of them, which are minatory, and, as it were, conditional, depending on the amendment of this or the accomplishment of that, although the locution itself may seem to be of an absolute character. These two things we shall prove with a few quotations from Scripture' [*lit.*, 'with some Divine authorities'].

<sup>5</sup> Genesis xv, 7.

and said: *Domine, unde scire possum, quod possessurus sim eam?* That is: Lord, whereby or by what sign am I to know that I am to possess it? Then God revealed to him that he was not to possess it in person, but that his sons would do so after four hundred years; and Abraham then understood the promise, which in itself was most true; for, in giving it to his sons for love of him, God was giving it to himself. And thus Abraham was deceived by the way in which he himself had understood the prophecy. If he had then acted according to his own understanding of it, those that saw him die without its having been given to him might have erred greatly; for they were not to see the time of its fulfilment. And, as they had heard him say that God would give it to him,<sup>1</sup> they would have been confounded and would have believed it to have been false.

3. Likewise to his grandson Jacob, when Joseph his son brought him to Egypt because of the famine in Chanaan, and when he was on the road, God appeared and said: *Jacob, Jacob, noli timere, descende in Aegyptum, quia in gentem magnam faciam te ibi. Ego descendam tecum illuc. . . . Et inde adducam te revertentem.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: Jacob, fear not; go down into Egypt, and I will go down there with thee; and, when thou goest forth thence again, I will bring thee out and guide thee. This promise, as it would seem according to our own manner of understanding, was not fulfilled, for, as we know, the good old man Jacob died in Egypt and never left it alive. The word of God was to be fulfilled in his children, whom He brought out thence after many years, being Himself their guide upon the way. It is clear that anyone who had known of this promise made by God to Jacob would have considered it certain that Jacob, even as he had gone to Egypt alive, in his own person,<sup>3</sup> by the command and favour of God, would of a certainty leave it, alive and in his own person,<sup>4</sup> in the same form and manner as he went there, since God had promised him a favourable return; and such a one would have been deceived, and would have marvelled greatly, when he saw him die in Egypt, and the promise, in the sense in which he understood it, remain unfulfilled. And thus, while the words of God are in themselves most true, it is possible to be greatly mistaken with regard to them.

4. In the Judges, again, we read that, when all the tribes of Israel had come together to make war against the tribe of Benjamin, in order to punish a certain evil to which that tribe had been consenting, they

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'that God had promised it to him.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'in his own person.'

<sup>2</sup> Genesis xlvii, 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'and in his own person.'

were so certain of victory because God had appointed them a captain for the war, that, when twenty-two thousand of their men were conquered and slain, they marvelled very greatly; and, going into the presence of God, they wept all that day, knowing not the cause of the fall, since they had understood<sup>1</sup> that the victory was to be theirs. And, when they enquired of God if they should give battle again or no, He answered that they should go and fight against them. This time they considered victory to be theirs already, and went out with great boldness,<sup>2</sup> and were conquered again the second time, with the loss of eighteen thousand of their men. Thereat they were greatly confused, and knew not what to do, seeing that God had commanded them to fight and yet each time they were vanquished, though they were superior<sup>3</sup> to their enemies in number and strength, for the men of Benjamin were no more than twenty-five thousand and seven hundred and they were four hundred thousand. And in this way they were mistaken in their manner of understanding the words of God. His words were not deceptive, for He had not told them that they would conquer, but that they should fight; for by these defeats God wished to chastise a certain neglect and presumption of theirs, and thus to humble them. But, when in the end He answered that they would conquer, it was so, although they conquered only after the greatest stratagem and toil.<sup>4</sup>

5. In this way, and in many other ways, souls are oftentimes deceived with respect to locutions and revelations that come from God, because they interpret them according to their apparent sense<sup>5</sup> and literally; whereas, as has already been explained, the principal intention of God in giving these things is to express and convey the spirit that is contained in them, which is difficult to understand. And the spirit is much more pregnant in meaning than the letter, and is very extraordinary, and goes far beyond its limits. And thus, he that clings to the letter, or to a locution or to the form or figure of a vision,<sup>6</sup> which can be apprehended, will not fail to go far astray, and will forthwith fall into great confusion and error, because he has guided himself by sense according to these visions, and not allowed the spirit to work in detachment from sense. *Littera enim occidit, spiritus autem vivificat*,<sup>7</sup> as Saint Paul says. That is: The letter killeth and the spirit giveth life.<sup>8</sup> Wherefore in this matter of sense the letter must be set aside, and the soul

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'understood and considered.'

<sup>2</sup> So Alc. A, B: 'with great courage.' E.p.: 'with great daring.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'were so greatly superior.'

<sup>4</sup> Judges xx, 12 ff.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'according to the mind.' Cf. p. 113, above.]

<sup>6</sup> Alc., clearly in error, reads 'of a union.'

<sup>7</sup> 2 Corinthians iii, 6.

<sup>8</sup> A, B: 'The letter surely killeth, but the spirit giveth life.'

must remain in darkness, in faith, which is the spirit, and this cannot be comprehended by sense.

6. For which cause, many of the children of Israel, because they took the sayings and prophecies of the prophets according to the strict letter, and these were not fulfilled as they expected, came to make little account of them and believed them not; so much so, that there grew up a common saying among them—almost a proverb, indeed—which turned prophets into ridicule.<sup>1</sup> Of this Isaias complains, speaking and exclaiming in the manner following: *Quem docebit Dominus scientiam? et quem intelligere faciet auditum? ablactatos a lacte, avulsos ab uberibus. Quia manda remanda, manda remanda, expecta reexpecta, expecta reexpecta, modicum ibi, modicum ibi. In loquela enim labii, et lingua altera loquetur ad populum istum.*<sup>2</sup> This signifies: To whom shall God teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand His word and prophecy? Only them that are already weaned from the milk and drawn away from the breasts. For all say (that is, concerning the prophecies<sup>3</sup>): Promise and promise again; wait and wait again; wait and wait again;<sup>4</sup> a little there, a little there; for in the words of His lips and in another tongue will He speak to this people. Here Isaias shows quite clearly that these people were turning prophecies into ridicule, and that it was in mockery that they repeated this proverb: 'Wait and then wait again.' They meant that the prophecies were never fulfilled for them, for they were wedded to the letter, which is the milk of infants, and to their own sense, which is the breasts,<sup>5</sup> both of which contradict the greatness of spiritual knowledge. Wherefore he says: To whom shall He teach the wisdom of His prophecies? And whom shall He make to understand His doctrine, save them that are already weaned from the milk of the letter and from the breasts of their own senses? For this reason these people understand it not, save according to this milk<sup>6</sup> of the husk and letter, and these breasts of their own sense, since they say: Promise and promise again;<sup>7</sup> wait and wait again, etc. For it is in the doctrine of the mouth of God, and not in their own doctrine, and it is in another tongue than their own, that God shall speak to them.

7. And thus, in interpreting prophecy, we have not to consider our

<sup>1</sup> Alc. alone has this last clause.

<sup>2</sup> Isaias xxviii, 9-11.

<sup>3</sup> Only Alc., e.p. have the parenthesis.

<sup>4</sup> [For 'wait,' we may also read 'hope,' the Spanish word (*esperar*) here used expressing both these ideas.]

<sup>5</sup> A, B omit: 'which is the breasts.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'but follow this milk.' [This involves only the slight variant of *siguen* for *según*.]

<sup>7</sup> This phrase is repeated in Alc. only.

own sense and language, knowing that the language of God is very different from ours, and that it is spiritual language, very far removed from our understanding and exceedingly difficult. So much so is it that even Jeremias, though a prophet of God, when he sees that the significance of the words of God is so different from the sense commonly attributed to them by men, is himself deceived by them and defends the people, saying: *Heu, heu, heu, Domine Deus, ergone decepisti populum istum et Jerusalem, dicens: Pax erit vobis; et ecce pervenit gladius usque ad animam?*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: Ah, ah, ah, Lord God, hast Thou perchance deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, 'Peace will come upon you,' and seest Thou here that the sword reacheth unto their soul? For the peace that God promised them was that which was to be made between God and man by means of the Messiah Whom He was to send them, whereas they understood it of temporal peace; and therefore, when they suffered wars and trials, they thought that God was deceiving them, because there befell them the contrary of that which they expected. And thus they said, as Jeremias says likewise: *Exspectavimus pacem, et non erat bonum.*<sup>2</sup> That is: We have looked for peace and there is no boon of peace. And thus it was impossible for them not to be deceived, since they took the prophecy merely in its literal sense.<sup>3</sup> For who would fail to fall into confusion and to go astray if he confined himself to a literal interpretation of that prophecy which David spake concerning Christ, in the seventy-first Psalm, and<sup>4</sup> of all that he says therein, where he says: *Et dominabitur a mari usque ad mare; et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrarum.*<sup>5</sup> That is: He shall have dominion from one sea even to the other sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth. And likewise in that which he says in the same place: *Liberabit pauperem a potente, et pauperem, cui non erat adjutor.*<sup>6</sup> Which signifies: He shall deliver the poor man from the power of the mighty, and the poor man that had no helper. But later it became known that Christ was born<sup>7</sup> in a low estate and lived in poverty and died in misery; not only had He no dominion over the earth, in a temporal sense, while He lived, but He was subject to lowly people, until He died under the power of Pontius Pilate. And not only did He not deliver poor men—namely, His disciples—from the hands of the mighty, in a temporal sense, but He allowed them to be slain and persecuted for His name's sake.

<sup>1</sup> Jeremias iv, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremias viii, 15.

<sup>3</sup> The 1630 edition has: 'literal and grammatical sense.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'and in particular.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxxi, 8 [A.V., lxxii, 8].

<sup>6</sup> Psalm lxxi, 12 [A.V., lxxii, 12].

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'seeing Him later to be born.']

8. The fact is that these prophecies concerning Christ had to be understood spiritually, in which sense they were entirely true. For Christ was not only Lord of earth alone,<sup>1</sup> but likewise of Heaven, since He was God; and the poor who were to follow Him He was not only to redeem and free from the power of the devil,<sup>2</sup> that mighty one against whom they had no helper,<sup>3</sup> but also to make heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. And thus God was speaking, in the most important sense, of Christ, and of the reward of His followers,<sup>4</sup> which was an eternal kingdom and eternal liberty; and they understood this, after their own manner, in a secondary sense, of which God takes small account, namely that of temporal dominion and temporal liberty, which in God's eyes is neither kingdom nor liberty at all. Wherefore, being blinded by the insufficiency of the letter, and not understanding its spirit and truth, they took the life of their God and Lord, even as Saint Paul said in these words: *Qui enim habitabant Jerusalem, et principes ejus, hunc ignorantes et voces prophetarum, quæ per omne Sabbatum leguntur, judicantes impleverunt.*<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: They that dwelt in Jerusalem, and her rulers, not knowing Who He was, nor understanding the sayings of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath day, have fulfilled them by judging Him.

9. And to such a point did they carry this inability to understand the sayings of God as it behoved them, that even His own disciples, who had gone about with Him, were deceived, as were those two who, after His death, were going to the village of Emmaus, sad and disconsolate, saying: *Nos autem sperabamus quod ipse esset redempturus Israel.*<sup>6</sup> That is: We hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel. They, too, understood that this dominion and redemption were to be temporal; but Christ our Redeemer, appearing to them, reproved them as foolish and heavy and gross<sup>7</sup> of heart as to their belief in the things that the prophets had spoken.<sup>8</sup> And, even when He was going to Heaven, some of them were still in that state of grossness of heart, and asked Him, saying: *Domine, si in tempore hoc restitues Regnum Israel.*<sup>9</sup> That is: Lord, tell us if Thou wilt restore at this time the kingdom of Israel. The Holy Spirit causes many things to be said which

<sup>1</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'Lord of all the earth.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'from the hands and the power of the devil.' A, B: 'from the hands of the devil.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'against . . . helper.' A, B have 'powerful' for 'mighty.'

<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'of Christ and of His followers.' The addition is necessary to the sense.]

<sup>5</sup> Acts xiii, 27.

<sup>6</sup> St. Luke xxiv, 21.

<sup>7</sup> So Alc. The other MSS., and e.p. have: 'foolish and hard.'

<sup>8</sup> St. Luke xxiv, 25.

<sup>9</sup> Acts i, 6.

bear another sense than that which men understand; as can be seen in that which He caused to be said by Caiphias concerning Christ: that it was meet that one man should die lest all the people should perish.<sup>1</sup> This he said not of his own accord; and he said it and understood it in one sense, and the Holy Spirit in another.<sup>2</sup>

10. From this it is clear that, although sayings and revelations may be of God, we cannot always be sure of their meaning; for we can very easily be greatly deceived by them because of our manner of understanding them. For they are all<sup>3</sup> an abyss and a depth of the spirit, and to try to limit them to what we can understand concerning them, and to what our sense can apprehend, is nothing but to attempt to grasp the air, and to grasp some particle in it that the hand touches: the air disappears and nothing remains.

11. The spiritual teacher must therefore strive that the spirituality of his disciple be not cramped by attempts to interpret all supernatural apprehensions, which are no more than spiritual particles, lest he come to retain naught but these, and have no spirituality at all. But let the teacher wean his disciple from all visions and locutions, and impress upon him the necessity of dwelling in the liberty and darkness of faith, wherein are received spiritual liberty and abundance,<sup>4</sup> and consequently the wisdom and understanding necessary to interpret the sayings of God. For it is impossible for a man, if he be not spiritual, to judge of the things of God or understand them in a reasonable way, and he is not spiritual when he judges them according to sense; and thus, although they come to him beneath the disguise of sense, he understands them not. This Saint Paul well expresses in these words: *Animalis autem homo non percipit ea quæ sunt spiritus Dei: stultitia enim est illi, et non potest intelligere: quia de spiritualibus examinatur. Spiritualis autem judicat omnia.*<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: The animal man perceives not the things which are of the Spirit of God, for unto him they are foolishness and he cannot understand them because they are spiritual; but he that is spiritual judgeth all things. By the animal man is here meant one that uses sense alone; by the spiritual man, one that is not bound or guided by sense. Wherefore it is temerity to presume to have intercourse with God by way of a supernatural apprehension effected by sense, or to allow anyone else to do so.

12. And that this may be the better understood let us here set down

<sup>1</sup> St. John xi, 50.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits 'all.'

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 14.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'and a very different one.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'abundance of spirit.'

a few examples. Let us suppose that a holy man is greatly afflicted because his enemies persecute him, and that God answers him, saying: I will deliver thee from all thine enemies. This prophecy may be very true, yet, notwithstanding, his enemies may succeed in prevailing, and he may die at their hands. And so if a man should understand this after a temporal manner he would be deceived; for God might be speaking of the true and principal liberty and victory, which is salvation, whereby the soul is delivered, freed and made victorious<sup>1</sup> over all its enemies, and much more truly so and in a higher sense than if it were delivered from them here below. And thus, this prophecy was much more true and comprehensive than the man could understand if he interpreted it only with respect to this life; for, when God speaks, His words are always to be taken in the sense which is most important and profitable, whereas man, according to his own way and purpose, may understand the less important sense, and thus may be deceived. This we see in that prophecy which David makes concerning Christ in the second Psalm, saying: *Reges eos in virga ferrea, et tamquam vas figuli confringes eos.*<sup>2</sup> That is: Thou shalt rule all the people with a rod of iron and thou shalt dash them in pieces like a vessel of clay. Herein God speaks of the principal and perfect dominion, which is eternal dominion; and it was in this sense that it was fulfilled, and not in the less important sense, which was temporal, and which was not fulfilled in Christ during any part of His temporal life.

13. Let us take another example. A soul has great desires to be a martyr. It may happen that God answers him, saying: Thou shalt be a martyr. This will give him inwardly great comfort and confidence that he is to be martyred; yet it may come to pass that he dies not the death of a martyr, and notwithstanding this the promise may be true. Why, then, is it not fulfilled literally? Because it will be fulfilled, and is capable of being fulfilled,<sup>3</sup> according to the most important and essential sense of that saying—namely, in that God will have given that soul the love and the reward which belong essentially to a martyr;<sup>4</sup> and thus in truth He gives to the soul that which it formally desired and that which He promised it. For the formal desire<sup>5</sup> of the soul was, not that particular manner of death, but to do God a martyr's service, and to

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'free and victorious.'] So Alc., e.p. A, B have: 'whence the soul remains free and with victory.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm ii, 9.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'and is . . . fulfilled.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds: 'and by His making him a martyr of love, and granting him a prolonged martyrdom in sufferings, the continuance whereof is more painful than death.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'For the chief part of the desire.'

show its love for Him as a martyr does. For that manner of death is of no worth in itself without this love, the which love and the showing forth thereof and the reward belonging to the martyr may be given to it more perfectly by other means. So that, though it may not die like a martyr, the soul is well satisfied that it has been given that which it desired. For, when they are born of living love, such desires, and others like them, although they be not fulfilled in the way wherein they are described and understood, are fulfilled in another and a better way, and in a way which honours God more greatly than that which they might have asked. Wherefore David says: *Desiderium pauperum exaudivit Dominus*.<sup>1</sup> That is: The Lord has granted the poor their desire. And in the Proverbs Divine Wisdom says: *Desiderium suum justis dabitur*.<sup>2</sup> 'The just shall be given their desire.' Hence, then, since we see that many holy men have desired many particular things for God's sake, and that in this life their desires have not been granted them, it is a matter of faith that,<sup>3</sup> as their desires were just and true, they have been fulfilled for them perfectly in the next life. Since this is truth, it would also be truth for God to promise it to them in this life, saying to them: Your desire shall be fulfilled; and for it not to be fulfilled in the way which they expected.

14. In this and other ways, the words and visions of God may be true and sure and yet we may be deceived by them, through being unable to interpret them in a high and important sense, which is the sense and purpose wherein God intends them. And thus the best and surest course is to train souls in prudence so that they flee from these supernatural things, by accustoming them, as we have said, to<sup>4</sup> purity of spirit in dark faith, which is the means of union.

## CHAPTER XX

*Wherein is proved by passages from Scripture how the sayings and words of God, though always true, do not always rest upon stable causes.*

WE have now to prove the second reason why visions and words which come from God, although in themselves they are always true, are not always stable in their relation to ourselves. This is because of their causes, whereon<sup>5</sup> they are founded; for

<sup>1</sup> Psalm ix, 17 [A.V., x, 17].

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs x, 24.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'it is certain that . . .'

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'by bringing them, as we have said, into . . .'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'of the causes and motives whereon . . .'

God often makes statements founded upon creatures and their effects, which are changeable and liable to fail, for which reason the statements which are founded upon them are liable also to be changeable and to fail; for, when one thing depends on another, if one fails, the other fails likewise. It is as though<sup>1</sup> God should say: In a year's time I shall send upon this kingdom such or such a plague; and the cause and foundation for this warning is a certain offence which has been committed against God in that kingdom. If the offence should cease or change, the punishment might cease;<sup>2</sup> yet the threat was true because it was founded upon the fault committed at the time, and, if this had continued, it would have been carried out.<sup>3</sup>

2. This, we see, happened in the city of Ninive, where God said: *Adhuc quadraginta dies, et Ninive subvertetur.*<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: Yet forty days and Ninive<sup>5</sup> shall be destroyed. This was not fulfilled, because the cause of the threat ceased—namely, the sins of the city, for which it did penance—but, if this had not been so, the prophecy would have been carried into effect. We read likewise in the Third Book of the Kings that, when King Achab had committed a very great sin, God sent to prophesy<sup>6</sup> a great punishment—our father Elias being the messenger<sup>7</sup>—which should come upon his person, upon his house and upon his kingdom.<sup>8</sup> And, because Achab rent his garments with grief and clothed himself in haircloth and fasted, and slept in sackcloth and went about in a humble and contrite manner, God sent again, by the same prophet, to declare to him these words: *Quia igitur humiliatus est mei causa, non inducam malum in diebus ejus, sed in diebus filii sui.*<sup>9</sup> Which signifies: Inasmuch as Achab has humbled himself for love of Me, I will not send the evil whereof I spake in his days, but in the days of his son. Here we see that, because Achab changed his spirit and his former affection, God likewise changed His sentence.<sup>10</sup>

3. From this we may deduce, as regards the matter under discussion, that, although God may have revealed or affirmed something to a soul,

<sup>1</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'This is because of the causes and motives whereon they are founded; and it is to be understood that they will be so for as long as the cause endures which determines God (let us say) to chasten. It is as though . . .'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'cease or change.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'And these warnings or revelations are minatory or conditional.'

<sup>4</sup> Jonas iii, 4.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: ' . . . where God sent the prophet Jonas to proclaim this threat from Him in Ninive: Yet forty days and the city of Ninive . . .'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to promise.'] A, B: 'God sent to threaten him with.' E.p.: 'God sent him the threat of.'

<sup>7</sup> A, B omit: 'our father . . . messenger.'

<sup>8</sup> 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] xxi, 21.

<sup>9</sup> 3 Kings xxi, 27-9.

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: ' . . . because Achab changed, the threat and sentence of God ceased likewise.'

whether good or evil, and whether relating to that soul itself or to others, this may, to a greater or a lesser extent, be changed or altered or entirely withdrawn, according to the change or variation in the affection of this soul, or the cause whereon God based His judgment,<sup>1</sup> and thus it would not be fulfilled in the way expected, and oftentimes none would have known why, save only God. For God is wont to declare and teach and promise many things, not that they may be understood or possessed at the time, but that they may be understood at a later time, when it is fitting that a soul may have light concerning them, or when their effect is attained. This, as we see, He did with His disciples, to whom He spake many parables, and pronounced many judgments, the wisdom whereof<sup>2</sup> they understood not until the time when they had to preach it, which was when the Holy Spirit came upon them, of Whom Christ had said to them that He would explain to them all the things that He had spoken to them in His life. And, when Saint John speaks of that entry of Christ into Jerusalem, he says: *Hæc non cognoverunt discipuli ejus primum: sed quando glorificatus est Jesus, tunc recordati sunt quia hæc erant scripta de eo.*<sup>3</sup> And thus there may pass through the soul many detailed messages from God which neither the soul nor its director will understand until the proper time.

4. Likewise, in the First Book of the Kings, we read that, when God was wroth against Heli, a priest of Israel, for his sins in not chastising his sons, he sent to him by Samuel to say, among other words, these which follow: *Loquens locutus sum, ut domus tua, et domus patris tui, ministraret in conspectu meo, usque in sempiternum. Verumtamen absit hoc a me.* And this is as though He had said:<sup>4</sup> In very truth I said aforetime that thy house and the house of thy father should serve Me continually in the priesthood in My presence for ever, but this purpose is far from Me; I will not do this thing. For this office of the priesthood was founded for giving honour and glory to God, and to this end God had promised to give it to the father of Heli for ever if he failed not.<sup>5</sup> But, when Heli failed in zeal for the honour of God (for, as God Himself complained when He sent him the message, he honoured his sons more than God, overlooking their sins so as not to offend them),<sup>6</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'the cause to which God had regard.'

<sup>2</sup> Thus Alc., e.p. A, B have: 'the meaning whereof.'

<sup>3</sup> St. John xii, 16.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] ii, 30.

<sup>5</sup> So Alc., e.p. Alc., however, probably by an oversight, omits: 'if he failed not.' A, B have: 'and to this end He had promised the priesthood to his father,' etc., B adding: '[his father] for ever, if for ever good service and zeal continued in them.'

<sup>6</sup> A, B omit the parenthesis.

promise also failed which would have held good for ever if the good service and zeal of Heli had lasted for ever. And thus there is no reason to think that, because sayings and revelations<sup>1</sup> come from God, they must invariably come to pass in their apparent sense, especially when<sup>2</sup> they are bound up with human causes which may vary, change or alter.

5. And when they are dependent upon these causes<sup>3</sup> God Himself knows, though He does not always declare it, but pronounces the saying, or makes the revelation, and sometimes says nothing of the condition, as when He definitely told the Ninivites that they would be destroyed after forty days.<sup>4</sup> At other times He lays down the condition, as He did to Roboam, saying to him: 'If thou wilt keep My commandments, as did My servant David, I will be with thee even as I was with him, and will set thee up a house as I did to My servant David.'<sup>5</sup> But, whether He declares it or no, the soul must not rely upon its own understanding; for it is impossible to understand the hidden truths of God which are in His sayings, and the multitude of their meanings. He is above the heavens, and speaks according to the way of eternity;<sup>6</sup> we blind souls are upon the earth and understand only the ways of flesh and time.<sup>7</sup> It was for that reason, I believe, that the Wise Man said: 'God is in Heaven, and thou art upon earth; wherefore be not thou lengthy or hasty in speaking.'<sup>8</sup>

6. You will perhaps ask me: Why, if we are not to understand these things, or to play any part in them, does God communicate them to us? I have already said that everything will be understood in its own time by the command of Him Who spake it, and he whom God wills shall understand it, and it will be seen that it was fitting; for God does naught save with due cause and in truth. Let it be realized, therefore, that there is no complete understanding of the meaning<sup>9</sup> of the sayings and things of God, and that this meaning cannot be decided by what it seems to be, without great error, and, in the end, grievous confusion. This was very well known to the prophets, into whose hands was given the word of God, and who found it a sore trial to prophesy concerning

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'true in themselves.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'by the command of God Himself.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'And when this is so.'

<sup>4</sup> Jonas iii, 4.

<sup>5</sup> 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] xi, 38. [Actually it was to Jeroboam that this was said]

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'on the road of eternity.']

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: '... earth, so that we cannot attain to His secrets.'

<sup>8</sup> Ecclesiastes v, 1 [A.V., v, 2].

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'of the full meaning.'

the people; for, as we have said, many of the people saw that things came not to pass literally, as they were told them, for which cause they laughed at the prophets and mocked them greatly; so much so that Jeremias went as far as to say: 'They mock me all the day long, they scorn and despise me every one, for I have long been crying against evil and promising them destruction; and the word of the Lord has been made a reproach and a derision to me continually. And I said, I must not remember Him, neither speak any more in His name.'<sup>1</sup> Herein, although the holy prophet was speaking with resignation and in the form of a weak man who cannot endure the ways and workings<sup>2</sup> of God, he clearly indicates the difference between the way wherein the Divine sayings are fulfilled and the ordinary meaning which they appear to have; for the Divine prophets<sup>3</sup> were treated as mockers, and suffered so much from their prophecy that Jeremias himself said elsewhere: *Formido et laqueus facta est nobis vaticinatio et contritio*.<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: Prophecy has become to us fear and snares and contradiction of spirit.

7. And the reason why Jonas fled when God sent him to preach the destruction of Ninive was this, namely, that he knew the different meanings of the sayings of God with respect to the understanding of men and with respect to the causes of the sayings.<sup>5</sup> And thus, lest they should mock him when they saw that his prophecy was not fulfilled, he went away and fled in order not to prophesy; and thus he remained waiting all the forty days outside the city, to see if his prophecy was fulfilled; and, when it was not fulfilled, he was greatly afflicted, so much so that he said to God: *Obsecro, Domine, numquid non hoc est verbum meum, cum adhuc essem in terra mea? propter hoc præoccupavi, ut fugerem in Tharsis*.<sup>6</sup> That is: I pray Thee, O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my own country? Therefore was I vexed, and fled away to Tharsis. And the saint was wroth and besought God to take away his life.

8. Why, then, must we marvel that God should speak and reveal certain things to souls which come not to pass in the sense wherein they understand them? For, if God should affirm or represent such or such a thing to the soul, whether good or evil, with respect to itself or to another, and if that thing be founded upon a certain affection or service or offence of that soul, or of another, at that time, with respect

<sup>1</sup> Jeremias xx, 7-9.

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'the sacred prophets.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: '... namely, that he understood not the truth of the sayings of God and knew not wholly their meaning.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'ways and secrets.'

<sup>4</sup> Lamentations iii, 47.

<sup>6</sup> Jonas iv, 2.

to God, so that, if the soul persevere therein, it will be fulfilled; yet even then its fulfilment<sup>1</sup> is not certain, since it is not certain that the soul will persevere. Wherefore we must rely,<sup>2</sup> not upon understanding, but upon faith.

## CHAPTER XXI

*Wherein is explained how at times, although God answers the prayers that are addressed to Him, He is not pleased that we should use such methods. It is also shown how, although He condescend to us and answer us, He is oftentimes wroth.*

CERTAIN spiritual men, as we have said, assure themselves that it is a good thing to display curiosity, as they sometimes do, in striving to know certain things by supernatural methods, thinking that,<sup>3</sup> because God occasionally answers their importunity, this is a good method and pleasing to Him. Yet the truth is that, although He may answer them, the method is not good, neither is it pleasing to God, but rather it is displeasing to Him; and not only so, but oftentimes He is greatly offended and wroth.<sup>4</sup> The reason for this is that it is lawful<sup>5</sup> for no creature to pass beyond the limits that God has ordained for its governance after the order of nature.<sup>6</sup> He has laid down rational and natural limits for man's governance;<sup>7</sup> wherefore to desire to pass beyond them is not lawful,<sup>8</sup> and to desire to seek out and attain to anything by supernatural means is to go beyond these natural limits.<sup>9</sup> It is therefore an unlawful thing,<sup>10</sup> and it is therefore not pleasing to God,<sup>11</sup> for He is offended by all that is unlawful. King Achaz was well aware of this, since, although Isaias told him from God to ask for a sign, he would not do so, saying: *Non petam, et non tentabo Dominum.*<sup>12</sup> That is: I will not ask such a thing, neither will I tempt

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'as it sounds' [i.e., in the sense which it seems to bear].

<sup>2</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'and take our stand.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'Certain spiritual men, as we have said, assure themselves—not reflecting much upon the curiosity which they sometimes display in striving to know certain things by supernatural means—and think that . . .'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'oftentimes He is very grieved and wroth at it.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'it is fitting.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'after the order of nature.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits: 'and natural.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'is not fitting.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p. omits 'natural.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: 'It is not a holy or a fitting thing.'

<sup>11</sup> E.p. omits the remainder of this paragraph.

<sup>12</sup> Isaias vii, 12. [The Spanish has 'Achab' for 'Achaz.']

God. For it is tempting God to seek to commune with Him by extraordinary ways, such as those that are supernatural.

2. But why, you will say, if it be a fact that God is displeased, does He sometimes answer? I reply that it is sometimes the devil who answers. And, if it is God Who answers,<sup>1</sup> I reply that He does so because of the weakness of the soul that desires to travel along that road, lest it should be disconsolate and go backward, or lest it should think that God is wroth with it and should be overmuch afflicted;<sup>2</sup> or for other reasons known to God, founded upon the weakness of that soul, whereby God sees that it is well that He should answer it and deigns to do so in that way. In a like manner, too, does He treat many weak and tender souls, granting them favours and sweetness in sensible converse with Himself, as has been said above; this is not because He desires or is pleased that they should commune with Him after that manner or by these methods; it is that He gives to each one, as we have said, after the manner best suited to him. For God is like a spring, whence everyone draws water according to the vessel which he carries. Sometimes a soul is allowed to draw it by these extraordinary channels; but it follows not from this that it is lawful to draw water<sup>3</sup> by them, but only that God Himself can permit this, when, how and to whom He wills, and for what reason He wills, without the party concerned having any right in the matter. And thus, as we say, He sometimes deigns to satisfy the desire and the prayer of certain souls, whom, since they are good and sincere, He wills not to fail to succour, lest He should make them sad, but it is not because He is pleased with their methods that He wills it. This will be the better understood by the following comparison.

3. The father of a family has on his table many and different kinds of food, some of which are better than others. A child is asking him for a certain dish, not the best, but the first that meets its eye, and it asks for this dish because it would rather eat of it than any other; and as the father sees that, even if he gives it the better kind of food, it will not take it, but will have that which it asks for, since that alone pleases it, he gives it that, regretfully, lest it should take no food at all and be miserable. In just this way, we observe, did God treat the children of Israel when they asked Him for a king: He gave them one, but unwillingly, because it was not good for them. And thus He said to Samuel: *Audi*

<sup>1</sup> Alc. omits: 'I reply that . . . God Who answers,' probably by an oversight.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'overmuch tempted.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'that it is fitting to seek to draw water.'

*vocem populi in omnibus quæ loquuntur tibi: non enim te abjecerunt, sed me.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: Hearken unto the voice of this people and grant them the king whom they ask of thee, for they have not rejected thee but Me, that I should not reign over them. In this same way God condescends to certain souls, and grants them that which is not best for them, because they will not or cannot walk by any other road. And thus certain souls attain to tenderness and sweetness of spirit or sense; and God grants them this<sup>2</sup> because they are unable to partake of the stronger and more solid food of the trials of the Cross of His Son, which He would prefer them to take, rather than aught else.

4. I consider, however, that the desire to know things by supernatural means is much worse than the desire for other spiritual favours pertaining to the senses; for I cannot see how the soul that desires them can fail to commit, at the least, venial sin, however good may be its aims, and however far advanced it may be on the road to perfection; and if anyone should bid the soul desire them, and consent to it, he sins likewise. For there is no necessity for any of these things, since the soul has its natural reason and the doctrine and law of the Gospel, which are quite sufficient for its guidance, and there is no difficulty or necessity that cannot be solved and remedied by these means, which are very pleasing to God and of great profit to souls; and such great use must we make of our reason and of Gospel doctrine that, if certain things be told us supernaturally, whether at our desire or no, we must receive only that which is in clear conformity with reason and Gospel law. And then we must receive it, not because it is revelation, but because it is reason, and not allow ourselves to be influenced by the fact that it has been revealed. Indeed, it is well in such a case to look at that reason and examine it very much more closely<sup>3</sup> than if there had been no revelation concerning it; inasmuch as the devil utters many things that are true, and that will come to pass, and that are in conformity with reason, in order that he may deceive.

5. Wherefore, in all our needs, trials and difficulties, there remains to us no better and surer means than prayer and hope that God will provide for us, by such means as He wills.<sup>4</sup> This is the advice given to us in the Scriptures, where we read that, when King Josaphat was

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] viii, 7.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'And if certain souls . . . or sense, God grants them this,' etc.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'And then we must receive that which is in conformity with reason and Gospel law; and even then it is well to look at it and examine it very much more closely . . .'

<sup>4</sup> A: 'than hope through the means that He wills.'

greatly afflicted and surrounded<sup>1</sup> by enemies, the saintly King gave himself to prayer, saying to God: *Cum ignoremus quid facere debeamus, hoc solum habemus residui, ut oculos nostros dirigamus ad te.*<sup>1</sup> Which is as though he had said: When means fail and reason is unable to succour us in our necessities, it remains for us only to lift up our eyes to Thee, that Thou mayest succour us as is most pleasing to Thee.

6. And further, although this has also been made clear, it will be well to prove, from certain passages of Scripture, that, though God may answer such requests, He is none the less sometimes wroth. In the First Book of the Kings it is said that, when King Saul begged<sup>2</sup> that the prophet Samuel, who was now dead, might speak to him, the said prophet appeared to him, and that God was wroth with all this, since Samuel at once reproved Saul for having done such a thing, saying: *Quare inquietasti me, ut suscitarer?*<sup>3</sup> That is: Why hast thou disquieted me, in causing me to arise? We also know that, in spite of having answered the children of Israel and given them the meat that they besought of Him, God was nevertheless greatly incensed against them; for He sent fire from Heaven upon them as a punishment, as we read in the Pentateuch,<sup>4</sup> and as David relates in these words: *Adhuc escæ eorum erant in ore ipsorum, et ira Dei descendit super eos.*<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: Even as they had the morsels in their mouths, the wrath of God came down upon them. And likewise we read in Numbers that God was greatly wroth<sup>6</sup> with Balaam the prophet, because he went to the Madianites when Balac their king sent for him, although God had bidden him go, because he desired to go and had begged it of God; and while he was yet in the way there appeared to him an angel with a sword, who desired to slay him, and said to him: *Perversa est via tua, mihiq; contraria.*<sup>7</sup> 'Thy way is perverse and contrary to Me.' For which cause he desired to slay him.

7. After this manner and many others God deigns to satisfy the desires of souls though He be wroth with them. Concerning this we have many testimonies in Scripture; and, in addition, many illustrations,<sup>8</sup> though in a matter that is so clear these are unnecessary.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Paralipomenon [A.V., 2 Chronicles] xx, 12.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. has 'desired' for 'begged.'

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] xxviii, 15.

<sup>4</sup> E.p. is more precise: 'in the Book of Numbers.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxxvii, 30-1 [A.V., lxxviii, 30-1].

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'that God was none the less wroth.'

<sup>7</sup> Numbers xxii, 32.

<sup>8</sup> So A. B. E.p. has: 'Concerning this there are many more testimonies in Divine Scripture, and many illustrations.'

I will merely say that to desire to commune with God by such means is a most perilous thing, more so than I can express, and that one who is affectioned to such methods will not fail to err greatly and will often find himself in confusion. Anyone who in the past has prized them will understand me from his own experience. For over and above the difficulty that there is in being sure that one is not going astray<sup>1</sup> in respect of locutions and visions which are of God, there are ordinarily many of these locutions and visions which are of the devil; for in his converse with the soul the devil habitually wears the same guise as God assumes in His dealings with it, setting before it things that are very like to those which God communicates to it, insinuating himself, like the wolf in sheep's clothing, among the flock, with a success so nearly complete that he can hardly be recognized. For, since he says many things that are true, and in conformity with reason, and things that come to pass as he describes them,<sup>2</sup> it is very easy for the soul to be deceived, and to think that, since these things come to pass as he says, and the future is correctly foretold, this can be the work of none save God; for such souls know not that it is a very easy thing for one that has clear natural light to be acquainted, as to their causes, with things, or with many of them, which have been or shall be.<sup>3</sup> And since the devil has a very clear light of this kind, he can very easily<sup>4</sup> deduce effect from cause, although it may not always turn out as he says, because all causes<sup>5</sup> depend upon the will of God. Let us take an example.

8. The devil knows that the constitution of the earth and the atmosphere, and the laws ruling the sun, are disposed in such manner and in such degree that, when a certain moment has arrived, it will necessarily follow, according to the laws of nature laid down for these elements, that they will infect<sup>6</sup> people with pestilence, and he knows in what places this will be more severe and in what places less so. Here you have a knowledge of pestilence in respect of its causes. What a wonderful thing it seems<sup>7</sup> when the devil reveals this to a soul, saying: 'In a year or in six months from now there will be pestilence,' and it happens as he says! And yet this is a prophecy of the devil. In the same way he may have a knowledge of earthquakes, and, seeing that the

<sup>1</sup> So e.p. The Codices have: 'that there is in not going astray.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'that come out true.'] E.p.: 'that come out exact.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'and thus [such a] one will predict many things of the future.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'very easily.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'all things.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'according to their laws, that they will infect.'

<sup>7</sup> [Or: 'Is it such a wonderful thing . . . as he says? It is merely a prophecy of the devil.']

bowels of the earth are filling with air, will say: 'At such a time there will be an earthquake.' Yet this is only natural knowledge,<sup>1</sup> for the possession of which it suffices for the spirit to be free from the passions of the soul, even as Boetius says in these words: *Si vis claro lumine cernere verum, gaudia pelle, timorem, spemque fugato, nec dolor adsit.*<sup>2</sup> That is: If thou desire to know truths with the clearness of nature, cast from thee rejoicing and fear and hope and sorrow.

9. And likewise supernatural events and<sup>3</sup> happenings may be known, in their causes, in matters concerning Divine Providence, which deals most justly and surely as is required by their good or evil causes as regards the sons of men.<sup>4</sup> For one may know by natural means<sup>5</sup> that such or such a person, or such or such a city, or some other place, is in such or such necessity, or has reached such or such a point, so that God, according to His providence and justice, must deal with such a person or thing in the way required by its cause, and in the way that is fitting for it, whether by means of punishment or of reward, as the cause merits. And then one can say: 'At such a time God will give you this, or will do this, or that will come to pass, of a surety.'<sup>6</sup> It was this that holy Judith said to Holofernes,<sup>7</sup> when, in order to persuade him that the children of Israel would without fail be destroyed, she first related to him many of their sins and the evil deeds that they did. And then she said: *Et, quoniam hæc faciunt, certum est quod in perditionem dabuntur.* Which signifies: Since they do these things, it is certain that they will be destroyed. This is to know the punishment in the cause,<sup>8</sup> and it is as though she had said: It is certain that such sins must be the cause of such punishments, at the hand of God Who is most just. And as the Divine Wisdom says: *Per quæ quis peccat, per hæc et torquetur.*<sup>9</sup> With respect to that and for that wherein a man sins, therein is he punished.

10. The devil may have knowledge of this, not only naturally, but

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits the remainder of the paragraph.

<sup>2</sup> The exact reading in Boetius is: 'Tu quoque si vis lumine claro cernere verum—Tramite recto carpere callem—Gaudia pelle—Pelle timorem—Spemque fugato—Nec dolor adsit' (Migne, Vol. LXXV, p. 122).

<sup>3</sup> A, B omit: 'events and.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'And likewise to some extent particular events and happenings may be deduced from Divine Providence, which is wont to deal most justly according to the good and evil [doings] of the sons of men.'

<sup>5</sup> So Alc. E.p. omits: 'by natural means.' A, B: 'one may know clearly.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'of a surety.'

<sup>7</sup> Judith xi, 12.

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'It is this that Achior meant when he said to Holofernes (Judith v, 18): *Quotiescumque præter Deum suum alterum coluerunt, dati sunt in prædæ, et in gladium et in opprobrium.* This is to know the punishment in the cause.'

<sup>9</sup> Wisdom xi, 17 [A.V., xi, 16].

also by the experience which he has of having seen God do similar things, and he can foretell it and do so correctly.<sup>1</sup> Again, holy Tobias was aware of the punishment of the city of Ninive because of its cause, and he thus admonished his son, saying: 'Behold, son, in the hour when I and thy mother die, go thou forth from this land, for it will not remain.'<sup>2</sup> *Video enim quia iniquitas ejus finem dabit ei.*<sup>3</sup> I see clearly that its own iniquity will be the cause of its punishment, which will be that it shall be ended and destroyed altogether. This might have been known by the devil as well as by Tobias, not only because of the iniquity of the city, but by experience, since they had seen that for the sins of the world God destroyed it in the Flood,<sup>4</sup> and that the Sodomites, too, perished for their sins by fire; but Tobias knew it also through the Divine Spirit.

11. And the devil may know that one Peter<sup>5</sup> cannot, in the course of nature, live more than so many years, and he may foretell this; and so with regard to many other things and in many ways that it is impossible to recount fully—nor can one even begin to recount many of them, since they are most intricate and subtle—he insinuates falsehoods;<sup>6</sup> from which a soul cannot free itself save by fleeing from all revelations and visions and locutions that are supernatural.<sup>7</sup> Wherefore God is justly angered with those that receive them, for He sees that it is temerity on their part to expose themselves to such great peril and presumption and curiosity, and things that spring from pride, and are the root and foundation of vainglory, and of disdain for the things of God, and the beginning of many evils<sup>8</sup> to which many have come. Such persons have succeeded in angering God so greatly that He has of set purpose allowed them to go astray and be deceived and to blind their own spirits and to leave the ordered paths of life and give rein to their vanities and fancies, according to the word of Isaías, where he says: *Dominus miscuit in medio ejus spiritum vertiginis.*<sup>9</sup> Which is as much as to say: The Lord hath mingled in the midst thereof the spirit of dissension and confusion. Which in our ordinary vernacular signifies the spirit of misunderstanding. What Isaías is here

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'at times.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. has 'city' for 'land.'

<sup>3</sup> Tobias xiv, 13.

<sup>4</sup> So Alc. E.p.: 'had destroyed men in the Flood.' A, B: 'since they had seen the sins for which God had destroyed the world with the Flood.'

<sup>5</sup> [i.e., any individual.]

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'he insinuates falsehoods.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits: 'that are supernatural.'

<sup>8</sup> So Alc. A, B: 'and the cause of many evils.' E.p.: 'and many evils.'

<sup>9</sup> Isaías xix, 14.

very plainly saying is to our purpose, for he is speaking of those who were endeavouring by supernatural means to know things that were to come to pass. And therefore he says that God mingled in their midst the spirit of misunderstanding; not that God willed them, in fact, to have the spirit of error, or gave it to them, but that they desired to meddle with that to which by nature they could not attain. Angered by this, God allowed them to act foolishly, giving them no light as to that wherewith He desired not that they should concern themselves. And thus the Prophet says that God mingled that spirit in them, privatively.<sup>1</sup> And in this sense God is the cause of such an evil—that is to say, He is the privative cause, which consists in His withdrawal of His light and favour, to such a point that they must needs fall into error.<sup>2</sup>

12. And in this way God gives leave to the devil to blind and deceive many, when their sins and audacities merit it; and this the devil can do and does successfully, and they give him credence and believe him to be a good spirit; to such a point that, although they may be quite persuaded that he is not so, they cannot undeceive themselves, since, by the permission of God, there has already been insinuated into them the spirit of misunderstanding, even as we read was the case with the prophets of King Achab, whom God permitted to be deceived by a lying spirit, giving the devil leave to deceive them, and saying: *Decipies, et prævalebis; egredere, et fac ita.*<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: Thou shalt prevail with thy falsehood and shalt deceive them; go forth and do so. And so well was he able to work upon the prophets and the King, in order to deceive them, that they would not believe the prophet Micheas, who prophesied the truth to them, saying the exact contrary of that which the others had prophesied, and this came to pass because God permitted them to be blinded, since their affections were attached to that which they desired to happen to them, and God answered them according to their desires and wishes; and this was a most certain preparation and means for their being blinded and deceived, which God allowed of set purpose.

13. Thus, too, did Ezechiel prophesy in the name of God. Speaking against those who began to desire to have knowledge direct from God, from motives of curiosity, according to the vanity<sup>4</sup> of their spirit, he says: When such a man comes to the prophet to enquire of Me through

<sup>1</sup> E.p. has 'permissively' for 'privatively.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... and favour, wherefore it follows that they must infallibly fall into error.'

<sup>3</sup> 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] xxii, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Alc. has: 'to the variety.'

him, I, the Lord, will answer him by Myself, and I will set My face in anger against that man; and, as to the prophet, when he has gone astray in that which was asked of him, *Ego Dominus decepi prophetam illum*.<sup>1</sup> That is: I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet. This is to be taken to mean, by not succouring him with His favour so that he might not be deceived; and this is His meaning when He says: I the Lord will answer him by Myself in anger<sup>2</sup>—that is, God will withdraw His grace and favour from that man. Hence necessarily<sup>3</sup> follows deception by reason of his abandonment by God. And then comes the devil and makes answer according to the pleasure and desire of that man, who, being pleased thereat, since the answers and communications are according to his will,<sup>4</sup> allows himself to be deceived greatly.

14. It may appear that we have to some extent strayed from the purpose that we set down in the title of this chapter, which was to prove that, although God answers, He sometimes complains. But, if it be carefully considered,<sup>5</sup> all that has been said goes to prove our intention; for it all shows that God desires not that we should wish for such visions, since He makes it possible for us to be deceived by them in so many ways.

## CHAPTER XXII

*Wherein is solved<sup>6</sup> a difficulty—namely, why it is not lawful, under the law of grace,<sup>7</sup> to ask anything of God by supernatural means, as it was under the old law. This solution is proved by a passage from Saint Paul.<sup>8</sup>*

**D**IFFICULTIES keep coming to our mind, and thus we cannot progress with the speed that we should desire. For as they occur to us, we are obliged of necessity<sup>9</sup> to clear them up, so that the truth of this teaching may ever be plain and carry its full force. But there is always<sup>10</sup> this advantage in these difficulties, that, although they somewhat impede our progress, they serve nevertheless

<sup>1</sup> Ezechiel xiv, 7-9.

<sup>2</sup> [Ezechiel xiv, 7.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'Hence infallibly.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'are in conformity with his will.'

<sup>5</sup> The passage from the beginning of the paragraph to this point is found only in Alc. and e.p. The latter reads 'is wroth' for 'complains.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'is treated.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'under the New Law.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. adds: 'Is is somewhat delectable for an understanding of the mysteries of our holy faith.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p. omits: 'of necessity.'

<sup>10</sup> Alc. alone has 'always.'

to make our intention the clearer and more explicit,<sup>1</sup> as will be the case with the present one.

2. In the previous chapter, we said that it is not the will of God that souls should desire to receive anything distinctly, by supernatural means, through visions, locutions, etc. Further, we saw in the same chapter, and deduced from the testimonies which were there brought forward from Scripture, that such<sup>2</sup> communion with God was employed in the Old Law and was lawful; and that not only was it lawful, but God commanded it. And when they used not this opportunity, God reproveth them,<sup>3</sup> as is to be seen in *Isaias*, where God reproves the children of Israel because they desired to go down<sup>4</sup> to Egypt without first enquiring of Him, saying: *Et os meum non interrogastis*.<sup>5</sup> That is: Ye asked not first at My own mouth what was fitting. And likewise we read in *Josue* that, when the children of Israel themselves are deceived by the Gabaonites, the Holy Spirit reproves them for this fault, saying: *Susceperunt ergo de cibariis eorum, et os Domini non interrogaverunt*.<sup>6</sup> Which signifies: They took of their victuals and they enquired not at the mouth of God. Furthermore, we see in the Divine Scripture that Moses always enquired of God, as did King David and all the kings of Israel with regard to their wars and necessities, and the priests and prophets of old, and God answered and spake with them and was not wroth, and it was well done; and if they did it not it would be ill done; and this is the truth. Why, then, in the new law—the law of grace—may it not now be as it was aforetime?

3. To this it must be replied that the principal reason why in the law of Scripture<sup>7</sup> the enquiries that were made of God were lawful, and why it was fitting that prophets and priests should seek visions and revelations of God, was because at that time faith had no firm foundation, neither was the law of the Gospel established; and thus it was needful that men should enquire of God and that He should speak, whether by words or by visions and revelations or whether by figures and similitudes or by many other ways of expressing His meaning. For all that He answered and spake and revealed belonged to the mysteries of our faith and things touching it or leading to it. And, since the things of faith are not of man, but come from the mouth of God

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'they serve nevertheless for the greater doctrine and clearness of our intention.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'Further, we know that such . . .'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'for it.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'they thought of going down.'

<sup>5</sup> *Isaias* xxx, 2.

<sup>7</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'why in the Old Law.'

<sup>6</sup> *Josue* ix, 14.

Himself, God Himself reproved them because they enquired not at His mouth in their affairs, so that He might answer,<sup>1</sup> and might direct their affairs and happenings toward the faith, of which at that time they had no knowledge, because it was not yet founded.<sup>2</sup> But now that the faith is founded in Christ, and, in this era of grace, the law of the Gospel has been made manifest, there is no reason to enquire of Him in that manner, nor for Him to speak or to answer as He did then. For, in giving us, as He did, His Son, which is His Word—and He has no other—He spake to us all together, once and for all, in this single Word, and He has no occasion to speak further.

4. And this is the sense of that passage with which Saint Paul begins, when he tries to persuade the Hebrews that they should abandon those first manners and ways of converse with God which are in the law of Moses, and should set their eyes on Christ alone, saying: *Multifariam multisque modis olim Deus loquens patribus in Prophetis: novissime autem diebus istis locutus est nobis in Filio.*<sup>3</sup> And this is as though he had said: That which God spake of old in the prophets to our fathers, in sundry ways and divers manners, He has now, at last, in these days, spoken to us once and for all in the Son. Herein the Apostle declares that God has become, as it were, dumb, and has no more to say,<sup>4</sup> since that which He spake aforetime, in part, to the prophets, He has now spoken altogether in Him, giving us the All, which is His Son.

5. Wherefore he that would now enquire of God, or seek any vision or revelation, would not only be acting foolishly, but would be committing an offence against God,<sup>5</sup> by not setting his eyes altogether upon Christ, and seeking no new thing or aught beside. And God might answer him after this manner, saying: If I have spoken all things to thee in My Word, Which is My Son, and I have no other word, what answer can I now make to thee, or what can I reveal to thee which is greater than this?<sup>6</sup> Set thine eyes on Him alone, for in Him I have spoken and revealed to thee all things, and in Him thou shalt find yet more than that which thou askest and desirest. For thou

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: '... of God Himself, and by His very mouth were spoken; therefore it was needful that, as we have said, they should enquire at the mouth of God Himself; wherefore He answered them, when they did it not, so that He might answer them ...'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'because it was not yet founded.'

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews i, 1.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: '... declares that God has spoken so much already, in this [way], that He has no more to desire.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: '... or revelation, would seem to be committing an offence against God.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'and I have ... greater than this.'

askest locutions and revelations, which are the part; but if thou set thine eyes upon Him, thou shalt find the whole; for He is My complete locution and answer, and He is all My vision and all My revelation; so that I have spoken to thee, answered thee, declared to thee and revealed to thee, in giving Him to thee as thy brother,<sup>1</sup> companion and master, as ransom and prize. For since that day when I descended upon Him with My Spirit on Mount Tabor, saying: *Hic est filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui, ipsum audite*<sup>2</sup> (which is to say: This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him), I have left off all these manners of teaching and answering, and I have entrusted this to Him. Hear Him; for I have no more faith to reveal, neither have I any more things to declare. For, if I spake aforetime,<sup>3</sup> it was to promise Christ; and, if they enquired of Me, their enquiries<sup>4</sup> were directed to petitions for Christ and expectancy concerning Him, in Whom they should find every good thing (as is now set forth in all the teaching of the Evangelists and the Apostles); but now, any who would enquire of Me after that manner, and desire Me to speak to him or reveal aught to him, would in a sense be asking Me for Christ again, and asking Me for more faith, and be lacking in faith, which has already been given in Christ; and therefore he would be committing a great offence against My beloved Son, for not only would he be lacking in faith, but he would be obliging Him again first of all to become incarnate and pass through life and death. Thou shalt find<sup>5</sup> naught to ask of Me, or to desire of Me,<sup>6</sup> whether revelations or visions; consider this well, for thou shalt find that all has been done for thee and all has been given to thee—yea, and much more also—in Him.

6. If thou desirest Me to answer thee with any word of consolation, consider My Son, Who is subject to Me, and bound by love of Me, and afflicted,<sup>7</sup> and thou shalt see how fully He answers thee. If thou desirest Me to expound to thee secret things, or happenings, set thine eyes on Him alone, and thou shalt find the most secret mysteries, and the

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'for He is the Truth, the Guide and the Life, and I have given Him to thee as thy brother,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew xvii, 5.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. abbreviates: '... on Mount Tabor, saying: "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Thou must seek no new manners of teaching and answering. For if I spake aforetime ...'

<sup>4</sup> Alc.: 'their hopes.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. abbreviates: '... would in some degree be not content with Christ, and thus he would be committing a great offence against My beloved Son. If thou hast Him, thou shalt find ...'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'of Me.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: '... consider My Son, obedient to Me and afflicted for love of Me ...'

wisdom and wondrous things of God, which are hidden in Him, even as My Apostle says: *In quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae Dei absconditi.*<sup>1</sup> That is: In this Son of God are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge of God. These treasures of wisdom shall be very much more sublime and delectable and profitable for thee than the things that thou desiredst to know. Herein the same Apostle gloried, saying: That he had not declared to them that he knew anything,<sup>2</sup> save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.<sup>3</sup> And if thou shouldst still desire other Divine or bodily revelations and visions, look also at Him made man, and thou shalt find therein more than thou thinkest, for the Apostle says likewise: *In ipso habitat omnis plenitudo Divinitatis corporaliter.*<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: In Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

7. It is not fitting, then, to enquire of God by supernatural means, nor is it now necessary that He should answer; since all the faith has been given us in Christ, and there is therefore no more of it to be revealed, nor will there ever be.<sup>5</sup> And he that now desires to receive anything in a supernatural manner, as we have said,<sup>6</sup> is, as it were, finding fault with God for not having given us a complete sufficiency in His Son. For, although such a person may be assuming the faith, and believing it, nevertheless he is showing a curiosity which belongs to faithlessness. We must not expect, then,<sup>7</sup> to receive instruction, or aught else, in a supernatural manner. For, at the moment when Christ gave up the ghost upon the Cross, saying, *Consummatum est,*<sup>8</sup> which signifies, 'It is finished,' an end was made, not only of all these forms, but also of all those other ceremonies and rites of the Old Law. And so we must now be guided in all things by the law of Christ made man, and by that of His Church, and of His ministers, in a human and a visible manner, and by these means we must remedy our spiritual weaknesses and ignorances, since in these means we shall find abundant medicine for them all. If we leave this path, we are guilty not only of curiosity, but of great audacity: nothing is to be believed in a supernatural way, save only that which is the teaching of Christ made man, as I say, and of His ministers, who are men.<sup>9</sup> So much so that Saint

<sup>1</sup> Colossians ii, 3.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... saying: That he knew no other thing ...'

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Colossians ii, 9.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'since, having spoken in Christ, He leaves no more to be desired.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. has: 'in an extraordinary supernatural manner,' and omits: 'as we have said.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'with this curiosity.'

<sup>8</sup> St. John xix, 30.

<sup>9</sup> These two sentences are based on A and B. Alc. omits several lines, apparently by an oversight. E.p. has 'by the doctrine of Christ' for 'by the law of Christ made man'; omits 'in a human and a visible manner'; and adds 'and withdraw from' to 'If we leave.'

Paul says these words: *Quod si Angelus de coelo evangelizaverit, praeterquam quod evangelizavimus vobis, anathema sit.*<sup>1</sup> That is to say: If any angel from Heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we men<sup>2</sup> preach unto you, let him be accursed and excommunicate.

8. Wherefore, since it is true that we must ever be guided by that which Christ taught us, and that all things else are as nothing, and are not to be believed unless they are in conformity with it, he who still desires to commune with God after the manner of the Old Law acts vainly. Furthermore, it was not lawful at that time for everyone to enquire of God; neither did God answer all men, but only the priests and prophets, from whose mouths it was that the people had to learn law and doctrine; and thus, if a man desired to know anything of God, he enquired of Him through the prophet or the priest and not of God Himself. And, if David enquired of God at certain times upon his own account, he did this because he was a prophet, and yet, even so, he did it not without the priestly vestment, as it is clear was the case in the First Book of the Kings, where he said to Abimelech the priest: *Applica ad me Ephod*<sup>3</sup>—which ephod was one of the chief of the priestly vestments, having which he then spake with God. But at other times he spake with God through the prophet Nathan and other prophets. And by the mouths of these prophets and of the priests men were to believe that that which was said to them came from God; they were not to believe it because of their own opinions.

9. And thus, men were not authorized or empowered at that time to give entire credence to what was said by God, unless it were approved by the mouths of priests and prophets. For God is so desirous that the government and direction of every man should be undertaken by another man like himself,<sup>4</sup> and that every man should be ruled and governed by natural reason,<sup>5</sup> that He earnestly desires us not to give entire credence to the things that He communicates to us supernaturally, nor to consider them as being securely and completely confirmed until they pass through this human aqueduct of the mouth of man. And thus, whenever He says or reveals something to a soul, He gives this same soul to whom He says it a kind of inclination to tell it

<sup>1</sup> Galatians i, 8.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits 'men,' and also 'who are men' above.

<sup>3</sup> [It was to Abiathar that this was said.] 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] xxiii, 9.

<sup>4</sup> [P. Silverio reads: 'like Himself,' but the context seems to require the interpretation here adopted.]

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and that . . . natural reason.'

to the person to whom it is fitting that it should be told. Until this has been done, it is not wont to give entire satisfaction, because the man has not taken it<sup>1</sup> from another man like himself.<sup>2</sup> We see in the Book of the Judges that the same thing happened to the captain Gedeon, to whom God had said many times that he should conquer the Madianites, yet he was fearful and full of doubts (for God had allowed him to retain that weakness) until he heard from the mouth of men what God had said to him. And it came to pass that, when God saw that he was weak, He said to him: 'Rise up and go down to the camp.' *Et cum audieris quid loquantur, tunc confortabuntur manus tue, et securior ad hostium castra descendes.*<sup>3</sup> That is: When thou shalt hear what men are saying there, then shalt thou receive strength in that which I have said to thee, and thou shalt go down with greater security to the hosts of the enemy. And so it came to pass that, having heard a dream related by one of the Madianites to another, wherein the Madianite had dreamed that Gedeon should conquer them, he was greatly strengthened, and began to prepare for the battle with great joy. From this it can be seen that God desired not that he should feel secure, since He gave him not the assurance by supernatural means alone, but caused him first to be strengthened by natural means.<sup>4</sup>

10. And even more surprising is the thing that happened in this connection to Moses, when God had commanded him, and given him many instructions, which He confirmed with the signs of the wand changed into a serpent and of the leprous hand, enjoining him to go and set free the children of Israel. So weak was he and so uncertain<sup>5</sup> about this going forward that, although God was angered, he had not the courage to summon up the complete faith necessary for going,<sup>6</sup> until God encouraged him through his brother Aaron, saying: *Aaron frater tuus Levites, scio quod eloquens sit: ecce ipse egredietur in occursum tuum, vidensque te, laetabitur corde. Loquere ad eum, et pone verba mea in ore ejus: et ego ero in ore tuo, et in ore illius,* etc.<sup>7</sup> Which is as though He had said: I know that thy brother Aaron is an eloquent man: behold,<sup>8</sup> he will come forth to meet thee, and, when he seeth thee, he will be glad at heart; speak to him and tell him all My words, and I will be in thy

<sup>1</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'in order that the man may take it.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'whom God has set in His place.'

<sup>3</sup> Judges vii, 11.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'should feel secure, until he had heard the same thing by the mouth of others.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and so dark.'] E.p.: 'and so hesitating and dark.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. has 'strength' for 'faith.'

<sup>7</sup> Exodus iv, 14-15.

<sup>8</sup> Alc. alone has 'behold.'

mouth and in his mouth, so that each of you shall believe that which is in the mouth of the other.<sup>1</sup>

11. Having heard these words, Moses at once took courage, in the hope of finding consolation in the counsel which his brother was to give him; for this is a characteristic of the humble soul, which dares not converse alone with God, neither can be completely satisfied without human counsel and guidance. And that this should be given to it is the will of God, for He draws near to those who come together to converse of truth, in order to expound and confirm it in them, upon a foundation of natural reason,<sup>2</sup> even as He said that He would do when Moses and Aaron should come together—namely, that He would be in the mouth of the one and in the mouth of the other. Wherefore He said likewise in the Gospel that *Ubi fuerint duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi sum ego in medio eorum*.<sup>3</sup> That is: Where two or three have come together, in order to consider that which is for the greater honour and glory of My name, there am I in the midst of them. That is to say, I will make clear and confirm in their hearts the truths of God. And it is to be observed that He said not: Where there is one alone, there will I be; but: Where there are at least two. In this way He showed that God desires not that any man by himself alone should believe his experiences to be of God,<sup>4</sup> or should act in conformity with them,<sup>5</sup> or rely upon them, but rather should believe the Church and<sup>6</sup> her ministers, for God will not make clear and confirm the truth in the heart of one who is alone, and thus such a one will be weak and cold.

12. Hence comes that whereon the Preacher insists, where he says: *Vae soli, quia cum ceciderit, non habet sublevantem se. Si dormierint duo, fovebuntur mutuo; unus quomodo calefiet? et si quispiam praevaluerit contra unum, duo resistent ei*.<sup>7</sup> Which signifies: Woe to the man that is alone, for when he falleth he hath none to raise him up. If two sleep together, the one shall give warmth to the other (that is to say: with the warmth of God Who is between them<sup>8</sup>); but one alone, how shall he be warm? That is to say: How shall he be other than cold as to the things of God? And if any man can fight and prevail against one enemy (that is, the devil, who can fight and prevail against those that are alone and desire to be alone as regards the things of God), two men

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'so that . . . the other.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'upon . . . reason.'

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew xviii, 20.

<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'the things which he has to be of God.']

<sup>5</sup> A, e.p.: 'neither should confirm them' [*confirme for conforme*].

<sup>6</sup> [Lit., '... with them, without the Church or ...'] E.p. has: '... with them, without the counsel and government of the Church or ...'

<sup>7</sup> Ecclesiastes iv, 10-12.

<sup>8</sup> The parenthetical words are omitted in A and B.

together will resist him—that is, the disciple and the master<sup>1</sup> who come together to know and do<sup>2</sup> the truth. And until this happens such a man is habitually weak and feeble in the truth, however often he may have heard it from God; so much so that, despite the many occasions on which Saint Paul preached the Gospel, which he said that he had heard, not of men, but of God, he could not be satisfied until he had gone to consult with Saint Peter and the Apostles, saying: *Ne forte in vacuum currerem, aut cucurrissem.*<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: Perchance he should run, or had run, in vain,<sup>4</sup> having no assurance of himself, until man had given him assurance. This seems a noteworthy thing, O Paul, that He Who revealed to thee this Gospel could not likewise reveal to thee the assurance of the fault which thou mightest have committed in preaching the truth concerning Him.<sup>5</sup>

13. Herein it is clearly shown that a man must not rely upon the things that God reveals, save in the way that we are describing; for, even in cases where a person is in possession of certainty, as Saint Paul was certain of his Gospel (since he had already begun to preach it), yet, although the revelation be of God, man may still err with respect to it,<sup>6</sup> or in things relating to it. For, although God reveals one thing, He reveals not always the other; and oftentimes He reveals something without revealing the way in which it is to be done. For ordinarily He neither performs nor reveals anything that can be accomplished by human counsel and effort, although He may commune with the soul for a long time, very lovingly. Of this Saint Paul was very well aware, since, as we say, although he knew that the Gospel was revealed to him by God, he went to take counsel with Saint Peter. And we see this clearly in the Book of Exodus, where God had communed most familiarly with Moses, yet had never given him that salutary counsel which was given him by his father-in-law Jethro—that is to say, that he should choose other judges to assist him, so that the people should not be waiting from morning till night.<sup>7</sup> This counsel God approved, though it was not He Who had given it to him, for it was a thing that fell within the limits of human judgment and reason. With respect to Divine visions and revelations and locutions, God is not wont to reveal them,<sup>8</sup> for He is ever desirous that men should make such use of

<sup>1</sup> [i.e., the penitent and the confessor or director.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'and work.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits the rest of this paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'may still err in the execution of it.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'for it was a thing that pertained to human counsel and judgment. And thus God is not wont to reveal all things concerning the visions and locutions of God that may pertain to human counsel and reason . . .'

<sup>6</sup> Galatians ii, 2.

<sup>7</sup> A, B: 'the truth of the Lord.'

<sup>8</sup> Exodus xviii, 21-2.

their own reason as is possible, and all such things have to be governed by reason,<sup>1</sup> save those that are of faith, which transcend all judgment and reason, although these are not contrary to faith.<sup>2</sup>

14. Wherefore let none think that, because it may be true that God and the saints commune with him familiarly about many things, they will of necessity explain to him the faults that he commits with regard to anything, if it be possible for him to recognize these faults by other means. He can have no assurance about this; for, as we read came to pass in the Acts of the Apostles, Saint Peter, though a prince of the Church, who was taught directly by God, went astray nevertheless with respect to a certain ceremony that was in use among the Gentiles, and God was silent. So far did he stray that Saint Paul reproved him, as he affirms, saying: *Cum vidissem, quod non recte ad veritatem Evangelii ambularent, dixi coram omnibus: Si tu judaeus cum sis, gentiliter vivis, quomodo Gentes cogis judaizare?*<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: When I saw (says Saint Paul) that the disciples walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said to Peter before them all: If thou, being a Jew, as thou art, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, how feignest thou to force the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? And God reproved not Saint Peter Himself for this fault, for that simulation was a thing that had to do with reason, and it was possible for him to know it by rational means.<sup>4</sup>

15. Wherefore on the day of judgment God will punish for their many faults and sins many souls with whom He may quite habitually have held converse here below, and to whom He may have given much light and virtue; for, as to those things that they have known that they ought to do, they have been neglectful, and have relied upon that converse that they have had with God and upon the virtue that He has given them.<sup>5</sup> And thus, as Christ<sup>6</sup> says in the Gospel, they will marvel at that time, saying: *Domine, Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetauimus, et in nomine tuo daemonia eiecimus, et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus?*<sup>7</sup> That is: Lord, Lord, were the prophecies that Thou spakest to us perchance not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name cast we not out devils?<sup>8</sup> And in Thy name performed we not

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'and all such . . . by reason.'

<sup>2</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'they are not contrary to reason and judgment.'

<sup>3</sup> Galatians ii, 14.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'for it was a thing that he might know by ordinary means.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'and on that account being neglectful.'

<sup>6</sup> So Alc. A, B: 'as Christ our Lord.' E.p.: 'as our Lord Jesus.'

<sup>7</sup> St. Matthew vii, 22.

<sup>8</sup> Alc. omits this sentence. E.p. adds: 'Indeed we have cast out devils.'

many miracles and mighty works? And the Lord says that He will answer them in these words: *Et tunc confitebor illis, quia numquam novi vos: discedite a me omnes qui operamini iniquitatem.*<sup>1</sup> That is to say: Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity, for I never knew you. Of the number of these was the prophet Balaam and others like to him, who, though God spake with them and gave them thanks,<sup>2</sup> were sinners. But the Lord will likewise give their proportion of reproof to His friends and chosen ones, with whom He communed familiarly here below, as to the faults and sins of neglect that they may have committed; whereof there was no need that God should Himself warn them, since He had already warned them through the natural reason and law that He had given to them.

16. In concluding this part of my subject, therefore, I say, and I infer from what has already been said, that anything, of whatsoever kind, received by the soul through supernatural means, must clearly and plainly, fully and simply,<sup>3</sup> be at once communicated to the spiritual director. For although there may seem no reason to speak of it, or to spend time upon doing so, since the soul is acting safely, as we have said, if it rejects it and neither pays heed to it nor desires it<sup>4</sup>—especially if it be a question of visions or revelations or other supernatural communications, which are either quite clear or very nearly so—nevertheless, it is very necessary to give an account of all these, although it may seem to the soul that there is no reason for so doing. And this for three causes.<sup>5</sup> First, because, as we have said, God communicates many things, the effect, power,<sup>6</sup> light and certainty whereof He confirms not wholly in the soul, until, as we have said, the soul consults him whom God has given to it as a spiritual judge, which is he that has the power to bind or to loose, and to approve or to blame, as we have shown by means of the passages quoted above;<sup>7</sup> and we can show it daily by experience, for we see humble souls to whom these things come to pass, and who, after discussing them with the proper persons, experience a new satisfaction, power, light and certainty; so much so that to some it seems that they have no effect upon them, nor do they even belong to them, until they have communicated them to the director, whereupon they are given to them anew.

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew vii, 23.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and gave them thanks.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'with all truth.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'nor desires it.'

<sup>5</sup> So Alc. B has: 'three reasons'; A, e.p.: 'three things.'

<sup>6</sup> A, B: 'the worth, effect . . .' [The word here rendered 'worth' is *esfuerzo*, which in the sixteenth century had that meaning among others, though its usual sense to-day is effort.]

<sup>7</sup> A, B omit: 'by means of the passages quoted above.'

17. The second cause is that the soul habitually needs instruction upon the things that come to pass within it, so that it may be led by that means to spiritual poverty and detachment, which is the dark night. For if it begins to relinquish this instruction—even when it desires not the things referred to—it will gradually, without realizing it, become callous<sup>1</sup> as it treads the spiritual road, and draw near again to the road of sense; and it is partly with respect to this that these distinct things happen.<sup>2</sup>

18. The third cause is that, for the sake of the humility and submission and mortification of the soul, it is well to relate everything to the director, even though he make<sup>3</sup> no account of it all and consider it of no importance. There are some souls who greatly dislike speaking of such things, because they think them to be unimportant, and know not how the person to whom they should relate them will receive them; but this is lack of humility, and for that very reason it is needful for them to submit themselves and relate these things. And there are others who are very timid in relating them, because they see no reason why they should have these experiences, which seem to belong to saints, as well as other things which they are sorry to have to describe; for which cause they think there is no reason to speak of them because they make no account of them; but for this very reason it is well for them to mortify themselves and relate them, until in time they come to speak of them humbly, unaffectedly, submissively and readily, and after this they will always find it easy to do so.

19. But, with respect to what has been said, it must be pointed out that, although we have insisted so much<sup>4</sup> that such things should be set aside, and that confessors should not encourage their penitents to discuss them, it is not well that spiritual fathers should show displeasure in regard to them, or should seek to avoid speaking of them or despise them, or make their penitents reserved and afraid to mention them, for it would be the means of causing them many inconveniences if the door were closed upon their relating them. For, since they are a means and manner<sup>5</sup> whereby God guides such souls, there is no reason for thinking ill of them or for being alarmed or scandalized by them; but rather there is a reason for proceeding<sup>6</sup> very quietly and kindly, for

<sup>1</sup> A, e.p. read 'rude' for 'callous.' [The change is a slight one: *enrudeciendo* for *endureciendo*.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and it is partly . . . happen.'

<sup>3</sup> [The Spanish phrase equally admits the reading: 'even though the soul make.']

<sup>4</sup> B: 'so rigorously.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'For, as we have said, they are a means; and, since they are a means and manner . . .'

<sup>6</sup> None of the MSS. have 'proceeding,' which e.p. supplies.

encouraging these souls and giving them an opportunity to speak of these things; if necessary, they must be exhorted to speak; and, in view of the difficulty that some souls experience in describing such matters, this is sometimes quite essential. Let confessors direct their penitents into faith,<sup>1</sup> advising them frankly to turn away their eyes from all such things, teaching them how to void the desire and the spirit of them, so that they may make progress, and giving them to understand how much more precious in God's sight is one work or act of the will performed in charity than are all the visions and communications<sup>2</sup> that they may receive from Heaven, since these imply neither merit nor demerit.<sup>3</sup> Let them point out, too, that many souls who have known nothing of such things have made incomparably greater progress than others who have received many of them.

## CHAPTER XXIII

*Which begins to treat of the apprehensions of the understanding that come in a purely spiritual way, and describes their nature.*

**A**LTHOUGH the instruction that we have given with respect to the apprehensions of the understanding which come by means of sense is somewhat brief, in comparison with what might be said about them, I have not desired to write of them at greater length; I believe, indeed, that I have already been too lengthy for the fulfilment of my present intention, which is to disencumber the understanding of them and direct the soul into the night of faith. Wherefore we shall now begin to treat of those other four apprehensions of the understanding, which, as we said in the tenth chapter,<sup>4</sup> are purely spiritual—namely, visions, revelations, locutions and spiritual feelings. These we call purely spiritual, for they do not (as do those that are corporeal and imaginary) communicate themselves to the understanding by way of the corporeal senses; but, without the intervention of any inward or outward corporeal sense, they present themselves to the understanding, clearly and distinctly, by supernatural means, passively—that is to say,

<sup>1</sup> [i.e., into the night of faith: cf. Chap. xxiii, § 4, below.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'than are all the visions and revelations.' A, B: 'than are all the visions and revelations and communications.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'since these . . . demerit.'

<sup>4</sup> It is in Chapter x (and not in viii, as is said in A, B and e.p.) that the author treats of these spiritual apprehensions.

without the performance of any act or operation on the part of the soul itself, at the least actively.<sup>1</sup>

2. It must be known, then, that, speaking broadly and in general terms, all these four apprehensions may be called visions of the soul; for we term the understanding of the soul also its sight. And since all these apprehensions are intelligible to the understanding, they are described, in a spiritual sense, as 'visible.' And thus the kinds of intelligence that are formed in the understanding may be called intellectual visions. Now, since all the objects of the other senses, which are all that can be seen, and all that can be heard, and all that can be smelt and tasted and touched, are objects of the understanding in so far as they fall within the limits of truth or falsehood, it follows that, just as to the eyes of the body all that is visible in a bodily way causes bodily vision, even so, to the spiritual eyes of the soul—namely, the understanding—all that is intelligible causes spiritual vision; for, as we have said, for the soul to understand is for it to see. And thus, speaking generally, we may call these four apprehensions visions. This cannot be said, however, of the other senses, for no one of them is capable, as such, of receiving the object of another one.

3. But, since these apprehensions present themselves to the soul in the same way as they do to the various senses, it follows that, speaking properly and specifically, we shall describe that which the understanding receives by means of sight (because it can see things spiritually, even as the eyes can see bodily) as a vision; and that which it receives by apprehending and understanding new things (as it were through the hearing, when it hears things that are not heard<sup>2</sup>) we describe as revelation; and that which it receives by means of hearing we call locution; and that which it receives through the other senses, such as the perception of sweet spiritual fragrance, and of spiritual taste and of spiritual delight which the soul may enjoy supernaturally, we call spiritual feelings. From all these the soul derives spiritual vision or intelligence, without any kind of apprehension concerning form, image or figure of natural fancy or imagination<sup>3</sup>; these things are communicated to the soul directly by supernatural means and a supernatural process.

4. Of these, likewise (even as we said of the other imaginary corporeal apprehensions), it is well that we<sup>4</sup> should here disencumber the understanding, leading and directing it by means of them into the

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'actively and as on its own account.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'whence it may derive them.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits the words in parenthesis.

<sup>4</sup> A reads: 'they.'

spiritual night of faith, to the Divine and substantial union of God;<sup>1</sup> lest, by letting such things encumber and stultify it, it should be hindered upon the road to solitude and detachment from all things, which is necessary to that end. For, although these apprehensions are nobler and more profitable and much more certain than those which are corporeal and imaginary, inasmuch as they are interior and purely spiritual, and are those which the devil is least able to counterfeit, since they are communicated to the soul more purely and subtly without any effort of its own or of the imagination, at least actively,<sup>2</sup> yet not only may the understanding be encumbered by them upon this road, but it is possible for it, through its own imprudence, to be sorely deceived.

5. And although, in one sense, we might conclude with these four kinds of apprehension, by treating them all together and giving advice which applies to them all, as we have given concerning all the others—namely, that they should neither be desired nor aspired to—yet, since we shall presently throw more light upon the way in which this is to be done, and certain things will be said in connection with them, it will be well to treat of each one of them in particular, and thus we shall now speak of the first apprehensions, which are intellectual or spiritual visions.

## CHAPTER XXIV

*Which treats of two kinds of spiritual vision that come supernaturally.*

**S**PEAKING now strictly of those visions which are spiritual, and are received without the intervention of any bodily sense, I say that there are two kinds of vision that can be received by the understanding: the one kind is of corporeal substances; the other, of incorporeal or separated substances. The corporeal visions have respect to all material things that are in Heaven and on earth, which the soul is able to see, even while it is still in the body, by the aid of a certain supernatural illumination, derived from God, wherein it is able to see all things that are not present, both in Heaven and on earth,<sup>3</sup> even as Saint John saw, as we read in the twenty-first chapter of the Apocalypse, where he describes and relates the excellence of the celestial Jerusalem,

<sup>1</sup> The 1630 edition emends: 'of the love of God.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'and on its own account.'

<sup>3</sup> The remainder of this paragraph is omitted by e.p.

which he saw in Heaven. Even so, again, we read of Saint Benedict that in a spiritual vision he saw the whole world.<sup>1</sup> This vision, says Saint Thomas in the first of his Quodlibets, was in the light that is derived from above, as we have said.

2. The other visions, which are of incorporeal substances, cannot be seen by the aid of this derived illumination, whereof we are here speaking, but only by another and a higher illumination which is called the illumination of glory. And thus these visions of incorporeal substances, such as angels and souls,<sup>2</sup> are not of this life, neither can they be seen in the mortal body; for, if God were pleased to communicate them to the soul, in essence as they are, the soul would at once go forth from the flesh and would be loosed from this mortal life. For this reason God said to Moses, when he entreated Him to show him His Essence: *Non videbit me homo, et vivet.*<sup>3</sup> That is: Man shall not see Me and be able to remain alive. Wherefore, when the children of Israel thought that they were to see God, or had seen Him, or some angel, they feared death, as we read in the Book of Exodus, where, fearing these things, they said: *Non loquatur nobis Dominus, ne forte moriamur.*<sup>4</sup> As if they had said: Let not God communicate Himself to us openly, lest we die. And likewise in the Book of Judges, Manue, father of Samson, thought that he and his wife had seen in essence the angel who spake with them (and who had appeared to them in the form of a most beautiful man) and he said to his wife: *Morte moriemur, quia vidimus Dominum.*<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: We shall die, because we have seen the Lord.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Gregory: *Dial.*, Bk. II, Chap. xxxv. 'Omnis etiam mundus velut sub uno solis radio collectus, ante oculos eius adductus est.'

<sup>2</sup> The Toledo edition reads: 'such as the Divine Being, angels, souls.' This is based on an erroneous reading attributed incorrectly to Andrés de la Encarnación, who does not say, in fact, that any MS. so varies the text, but that it *might be* so varied in accordance with the context. No MS. has: 'the Divine Being.'

<sup>3</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus xx, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Judges xiii, 22.

<sup>6</sup> E.p. abbreviates this paragraph thus: 'The other visions, which are of incorporeal substances, demand another and a higher illumination; and thus these visions of incorporeal substances, such as angels and souls, do not occur habitually, nor are they proper to this life; still less is that of the Divine Essence, which is proper to the Blessed in Heaven, save that it may be communicated to a soul fleetingly and as in passing.' The next two paragraphs are omitted from e.p. P. Jerónimo de San José, in the edition of 1630, copies from e.p. the lines given in this note above, and then continues: '[save when] God so allows, in spite of the condition of our natural life, withdrawing the spirit from it occasionally, as happened to the apostle Saint Paul, when he says that he saw unspeakable secrets in the third heaven.' The adjustments made by P. Salablanca and amplified by P. Jerónimo in the rest of the paragraph [cf. notes below] follow the most usual scholastic doctrine. Among the Discalced Carmelite writers who deal most fully and competently with this doctrine of spiritual visions are the authors of the *Cursus Theologia Mystica*, Vol. IV, Disp. xx, xxi; Felipe de la Santísima Trinidad: *Summa Theologia Mystica*, Pt. II, Tract. III, Disc. iv; *Médula Mística*, Trat. VI. St. Thomas (I p., q. 88, a. 1) says that we cannot *quidditative* know separated substances.

3. And thus these visions occur not in this life, save occasionally and fleetingly, when, making an exception to the conditions which govern our natural life, God so allows it. At such times He totally withdraws the spirit from this life, and the natural functions of the body are supplied by His favour. This is why, at the time when it is thought that Saint Paul saw these (namely, the incorporeal substances in the third heaven), that Saint says :<sup>1</sup> *Sive in corpore, nescio, sive extra corpus, nescio, Deus scit.*<sup>2</sup> That is, he was enraptured, and of that which he saw he says that he knows not if it was in the body or out of the body, but that God knows. Herein it is clearly seen that the limits of natural means of communication<sup>3</sup> were passed, and that this was the work of God. Likewise, it is believed that God showed His Essence to Moses, for we read that God said to him that He would set him in the cleft of the rock, and would protect him, by covering him with His right hand, and protecting him so that he should not die when His glory passed ; the which glory passed indeed, and was shown to him fleetingly, and the natural life of Moses was protected by the right hand of God.<sup>4</sup> But these visions that were so substantial—like that of Saint Paul and Moses, and that of our father<sup>5</sup> Elias, when he covered his face at the gentle whisper of God—although they are fleeting, occur only very rarely—indeed, hardly ever—and to very few ; for God performs such a thing in those that are very strong<sup>6</sup> in the spirit of the Church and the law of God, as were the three men named above.

4. But, although these visions of spiritual substances cannot<sup>7</sup> be unveiled and be clearly seen in this life by the understanding, they can nevertheless be felt in the substance of the soul, with the sweetest touches and unions, all of which belongs to spiritual feelings, whereof, with the Divine favour, we shall treat presently ; for our pen is being directed and guided to these—that is to say, to the Divine bond and union of the soul with Divine Substance. We shall speak of this when we treat of the dark and confused mystical understanding which remains to be described, wherein we shall show how, by means of this dark and loving knowledge, God is united with the soul in a lofty and Divine degree,<sup>8</sup> for, after some manner, this dark and loving

<sup>1</sup> Alc. omits : 'namely . . . Saint says.'

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 2.

<sup>3</sup> A, B : 'that the limits of life.'

<sup>4</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Only Alc. and the edition of 1630 have : 'our father.'

<sup>6</sup> The edition of 1630 omits 'very.' A, B [by changing one letter and writing *fuentes* for *fuertes*] read : 'that are spiritual fountains.'

<sup>7</sup> The edition of 1630 adds : 'according to the ordinary law.'

<sup>8</sup> This description the Saint probably accomplished, or intended to accomplish, in his commentaries on the last five stanzas of the *Dark Night*, which have not come down to us.

knowledge, which is faith, serves as a means to Divine union in this life, even as, in the next life, the light of glory serves as an intermediary to the clear vision of God.

5. Let us, then, now treat of the visions of corporeal substances, received spiritually in the soul, which come after the manner of bodily visions. For, just as the eyes see bodily visions by means of natural light, even so does the soul, through the understanding, by means of supernaturally derived light, as we have said, see those same natural things inwardly, together with others, as God wills; the difference between the two kinds of vision is only in the mode and manner of them. For spiritual and intellectual visions are much clearer and subtler than those which pertain to the body. For, when God is pleased to grant this favour to the soul, He communicates to it that supernatural light whereof we speak, wherein the soul sees the things that God wills it to see, easily and most clearly, whether they be of Heaven or of earth, and the absence or presence of them is no hindrance to the vision. And it is at times as though a door were opened before it into a great brightness, through which the soul sees a light, after the manner of a lightning flash, which, on a dark night, reveals things suddenly, and causes them to be clearly and distinctly seen, and then leaves them in darkness, although the forms and figures of them remain in the fancy. This comes to pass much more perfectly in the soul,<sup>1</sup> because those things that the spirit has seen in that light remain impressed upon it in such a way that whensoever it observes<sup>2</sup> them it sees them in itself as it saw them before;<sup>3</sup> even as in a mirror the forms that are in it<sup>4</sup> are seen whensoever a man looks in it, and in such a way that those forms of the things that he has seen are never wholly removed from his soul, although in course of time they become somewhat remote.<sup>5</sup>

6. The effect which these visions produce in the soul is that of quiet, illumination, joy like that of glory, sweetness, purity and love, humility and inclination or elevation of the spirit in God; sometimes more so, at other times less; with sometimes more of one thing, at other times more of another, according to the spirit wherein they are received and according as God wills.

7. The devil likewise can produce<sup>6</sup> these visions, by means of a

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits the rest of the paragraph.

<sup>2</sup> 'Whensoever, enlightened by God, it observes . . .' reads the edition of 1630.

<sup>3</sup> A: 'it sees them even as it saw them before.'

<sup>4</sup> Edition of 1630: 'that are represented in it.'

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 'more remote.'

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 'can produce or imitate.'

certain natural light,<sup>1</sup> whereby he brings things clearly before the mind, through spiritual suggestion, whether they be present or absent. There is that passage in Saint Matthew, which says of the devil and Christ: *Ostendit omnia regna mundi, et gloriam eorum.*<sup>2</sup> That is to say: He showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Concerning this certain doctors say that he did it by spiritual suggestion,<sup>3</sup> for it was not possible to make Him see so much with the bodily eyes as all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. But there is much difference between these visions that are caused by the devil and those that are of God. For the effects produced in the soul by the devil's visions are not like those produced by good visions; the former produce aridity of spirit as to communion with God and an inclination to esteem oneself highly, and to receive and set store by the visions aforesaid, and in no wise do they produce the gentleness of humility and love of God. Neither do the forms of such visions remain impressed upon the soul with the sweetness and brightness of the others; nor do they last, but are quickly effaced from the soul, save when the soul greatly esteems them, in which case this high esteem itself causes it to recall them naturally, but with great aridity of spirit, and without producing that effect of love and humility which is produced by good visions when the soul recalls them.

8. These visions, inasmuch as they are of creatures, wherewith God has no essential conformity or proportion,<sup>4</sup> cannot serve the understanding as a proximate means to union<sup>5</sup> with God. And thus the soul must conduct itself in a purely negative way concerning them, as in the other things that we have described, in order that it may progress by the proximate means—namely, by faith. Wherefore the soul must make no store or treasure of the forms of such visions as remain impressed upon it, neither must it lean upon them; for to do this would be to be encumbered with those forms, images and persons which remain inwardly within it, and thus the soul would not progress toward God by denying itself all things. For, even if these forms should be permanently set before the soul, they will not greatly hinder this progress, if the soul has no desire to set store by them. For, although it is true that the remembrance of them impels the soul to a certain love of God and contemplation, yet it is impelled and exalted much more by pure

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'making use of the fancy.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew iv, 8. Thus the Codices. E.p. omits the Latin text.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: '... by intelligible suggestion.' On this passage, cf. Cornelius a Lapide (*Commentaria in Matthæum*, Cap. IV) and St. Thomas (III p., q. 41, ad. 3).

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'or communication.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B: 'to essential union.'

faith and detachment in darkness from them all, without its knowing how or whence it comes to it. And thus it will come to pass that the soul will go forward, enkindled with yearnings of purest love for God, without knowing whence they come to it, or on what they are founded. The fact is that, while faith has become ever more deeply rooted and infused in the soul by means of that emptiness and darkness and detachment from all things, or spiritual poverty, all of which may be spoken of as one and the same thing, at the same time the charity of God has become rooted and infused in the soul ever more deeply also. Wherefore, the more the soul desires obscurity and annihilation with respect to all the outward or inward things that it is capable of receiving, the more is it infused by faith, and, consequently, by love and hope, since all these three theological virtues go together.<sup>1</sup>

9. But at certain times the soul neither understands this love nor feels it; for this love resides, not in sense, with its tender feelings, but in the soul, with fortitude and with a courage and daring that are greater than they were before, though sometimes it overflows into sense and produces gentle and tender feelings. Wherefore, in order to attain to that love, joy and delight which such visions produce and cause in the soul, it is well that the soul should have fortitude and mortification and love,<sup>2</sup> so that it may desire to remain in emptiness and darkness as to all things, and to build its love and joy upon that which it neither sees nor feels, neither can see nor feel in this life, which is God, Who is incomprehensible and transcends all things. It is well, then, for us to journey to Him by denying ourselves everything. For otherwise, even if the soul be so wise, humble and strong that the devil cannot deceive it by visions or cause it to fall into some sin of presumption, as he is wont to do, he will not allow it to make progress; for he sets obstacles in the way of spiritual detachment and poverty of spirit and emptiness in faith, which is the essential condition for union of the soul with God.

10. And, as the same teaching that we gave in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters, concerning supernatural apprehensions and visions of sense, holds good for these visions, we shall not spend more time here in describing them.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'since . . . together.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and love.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'in treating them more extensively.'

## CHAPTER XXV

*Which treats of revelations, describing their nature and making a distinction between them.*

ACCORDING to the order which we are here following, we have next to treat of the second kind of spiritual apprehension, which we have described above as revelations, and which properly belongs<sup>1</sup> to the spirit of prophecy. With respect to this, it must first be known that revelation is naught else than the discovery of some hidden truth or the manifestation of some secret or mystery. Thus God may cause the soul to understand something by making clear to the understanding the truth concerning it, or He may reveal to the soul certain things which He is doing or proposes to do.

2. Accordingly, we may say that there are two kinds of revelation. The first is the disclosure to the understanding of truths which are properly called intellectual knowledge or intelligence; the second is the manifestation of secrets, which are called revelations with more propriety than the others. For the first kind cannot strictly be called revelations, since they consist in this, that God causes the soul to understand naked truths, not only with respect to temporal things, but likewise with respect to spiritual things, revealing them to the soul clearly and openly. These I have desired to treat under the heading of revelations: first, because they have close kinship and similarity with them: secondly, in order not to multiply distinctions.

3. According to this method, then, we shall now be well able to divide revelations into two kinds of apprehension. The one kind we shall call intellectual knowledge, and the other, the manifestation of secrets and hidden mysteries of God. With these we shall conclude in two chapters as briefly as we may, and in this chapter following we shall treat of the first.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'some of which properly belong.'

<sup>2</sup> So Alc. A, B omit: 'and in . . . the first.' E.p. has: 'treating, in this first chapter, intellectual knowledge.'

## CHAPTER XXVI

*Which treats of the intuition of naked truths in the understanding, explaining how they are of two kinds and how the soul is to conduct itself with respect to them.*

IN order to speak properly of this intuition of naked truths which is conveyed to the understanding, the writer would need God to take his hand and to guide his pen; for know, dear reader, that<sup>1</sup> what they are to the soul cannot be expressed in words. But, since I speak not of them here of set purpose, but only that through them I may instruct the soul and lead it to Divine union, I shall suffer myself to speak of them here in a brief and modified form, as is sufficient for the fulfilment of that intention.

2. This kind of vision (or, to speak more properly, of knowledge of naked truths) is very different from that of which we have just spoken in the twenty-fourth chapter. For it is not like seeing bodily things with the understanding; it consists rather in comprehending and seeing with the understanding the truths of God, whether of things that are, that have been or that will be, which is in close conformity with the spirit of prophecy, as perchance we shall explain hereafter.

3. Here it is to be observed that this kind of knowledge is distinguishable according to two divisions: the one kind comes to the soul with respect to the Creator; the other with respect to creatures, as we have said. And, although both kinds are very delectable to the soul, yet the delight caused in it by the kind that relates to God is comparable to nothing whatsoever, and there are no words or terms wherein it can be described. This kind of knowledge is of God Himself, and the delight is in God Himself, whereof David says: 'There is naught soever like to Him.'<sup>2</sup> For this kind of knowledge comes to the soul in direct relation to God, when the soul, after a most lofty manner, has a perception of some attribute of God—of His omnipotence, of His might, of His goodness and sweetness, etc.; and, whensoever it has such a perception, that which is perceived cleaves to the soul. Inasmuch as this is pure contemplation, the soul clearly sees that there is no way wherein it can say aught concerning it, save to speak, in certain general terms, of the abundance of delight and blessing which it has felt, and this is expressed by souls that experience it; but not to the end that

<sup>1</sup> A, B: 'for you must know that.'

<sup>2</sup> [Psalm xxxix, 6: cf. A.V., xl, 5.]

what the soul has experienced and perceived may be wholly apprehended.

4. And thus David, speaking for himself when something of this kind had happened to him, used only common and general terms, saying: *Judicia Domini vera, justificata in semetipsa. Desiderabilia super aurum et lapidem pretiosum multum; et dulciora super mel et favum.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: The judgments of God<sup>2</sup>—that is, the virtues and attributes which we perceive in God—are in themselves true, justified, more to be desired than gold and very much more than precious stones, and sweeter than the honeycomb and honey. And concerning Moses we read that, when God gave him a most lofty manifestation of knowledge from Himself on an occasion when He passed before him, he said only that which can be expressed in the common terms above mentioned. And it was so that, when the Lord passed before him in that manifestation of knowledge, Moses quickly prostrated himself upon the ground,<sup>3</sup> saying: *Dominator Domine Deus, misericors et clemens, patiens, et multæ miserationis, ac verax. Qui custodis misericordiam in millia.*<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: Ruler,<sup>5</sup> Lord, God, merciful and clement, patient, and of great compassion, and true, that keepest mercy promised unto thousands. Here it is seen that Moses could not express that which he had learned from God in one single manifestation of knowledge, and therefore he expressed and gave utterance to it in all these words. And although at times, when such knowledge is given to a soul, words are used, the soul is well aware that it has expressed no part of what it has felt; for it knows that there is no fit name by which it can name it. And thus Saint Paul, when he was granted that lofty knowledge of God, made no attempt to describe it, saying only that it was not lawful for man to speak of it.

5. These Divine manifestations of knowledge which have respect to God never relate to particular matters, inasmuch as they concern the Chief Beginning, and therefore can have no particular reference, unless it be a question of some truth concerning a thing less than God, which is involved in the perception of the whole; but these Divine manifestations themselves—no, in no way whatsoever.<sup>6</sup> And these lofty manifestations of knowledge can come only to the soul that

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xviii, 10-11 [A.V., xix, 9-10].

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'That which we judge and perceive concerning God.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B omit 'quickly.'

<sup>4</sup> Exodus xxxiv, 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> [Lir., 'Emperor.']

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'and therefore can have no particular reference, unless this knowledge should be extended to some other truth concerning something less than God which is capable of being described in some way; but these general manifestations—no.'

attains to union with God, for they are themselves that union; and to receive them is equivalent to a certain contact with the Divinity<sup>1</sup> which the soul experiences, and thus it is God Himself Who is perceived and tasted therein. And, although He cannot be experienced manifestly and clearly, as in glory, this touch of knowledge and delight is nevertheless so sublime and profound that it penetrates the substance<sup>2</sup> of the soul, and the devil cannot meddle with it or produce any manifestation like to it, for there is no such thing, neither is there aught that compares with it, neither can he infuse pleasure or delight that is like to it; for such kinds of knowledge savour of the Divine Essence and of eternal life, and the devil cannot counterfeit a thing so lofty.

6. Nevertheless he might make some pretence of imitating it, by representing to the soul certain great matters and things which enchant the senses and can readily be perceived by them, and endeavouring to persuade the soul that these are God; but he cannot do this in such wise that they enter into the substance<sup>3</sup> of the soul and of a sudden<sup>4</sup> renew it and enkindle it with love, as do the manifestations of God. For there are certain kinds of knowledge, and certain of these touches effected by God in the substance of the soul, which enrich it after such wise that not only does one of them suffice to take from the soul once and for all the whole of the imperfections that it had itself been unable to throw off during its whole life, but it leaves the soul full of virtues and blessings<sup>5</sup> from God.

7. And these touches are so delectable to the soul, and the delight they produce is so intimate, that if it received only one of them it would consider itself well rewarded for all the trials that it had suffered in this life, even had they been innumerable; and it is so greatly encouraged and given such energy to suffer many things for God's sake that it suffers especially in seeing that it is not suffering more.

8. The soul cannot attain to these lofty degrees of knowledge by means of any comparison or imagination of its own, because<sup>6</sup> they are loftier than all these; and so God works them in the soul without making use of its own capacities. Wherefore, at certain times, when the soul is least thinking of it and least desiring it, God is wont to give it these Divine touches, by causing it certain remembrances of Himself.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. has 'Divine Truth' for 'Divinity.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'the inmost part.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'into the very interior part.' A: 'into the wisdom.'

<sup>4</sup> So Alc., D. A, B, C, P, e.p. have: 'and sublimely.' [The difference is slight: *sublimemente* for *sibitamente*.]

<sup>5</sup> A. erroneously, has: 'and visions.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. adds: 'as we have said.'

And these are sometimes suddenly caused in the soul by its mere recollection of certain things—sometimes of very small things. And they are so readily perceived<sup>1</sup> that at times they cause not only the soul, but also the body, to tremble. But at other times they come to pass in the spirit when it is very tranquil, without any kind of trembling, but with a sudden<sup>2</sup> sense of delight and spiritual refreshment.

9. At other times, again, they come when the soul repeats or hears some word, perhaps from Scripture or possibly from some other source; but they are not always equally efficacious and sensible, for oftentimes they are extremely faint; yet, however faint they may be, one of these recollections and touches of God is more profitable to the soul than many other kinds of knowledge or many meditations upon the creatures and the works of God. And, since these manifestations of knowledge come to the soul suddenly,<sup>3</sup> and independently of its own free will, it must neither desire to have them, nor desire not to have them<sup>4</sup>; but must merely be humble and resigned concerning them, and God will perform His work how and when He wills.

10. And I say not that the soul should behave in the same negative manner with regard to these apprehensions as with regard to the rest, for, as we have said, they are a part of the union towards which we are leading the soul, to which end we are teaching it to detach and strip itself of all other apprehensions. And the means by which God will do this must be humility and suffering for love of God with resignation<sup>5</sup> as regards all reward; for these favours are not granted to the soul which still cherishes attachments, inasmuch as they are granted through a very special love of God toward the soul which loves Him likewise with great detachment. It is to this that the Son of God referred, in Saint John, when He said: *Qui autem diligit me, diligitur a Patre meo, et ego diligam eum, et manifestabo ei me ipsum.*<sup>6</sup> Which signifies: He that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him. Herein are included the kinds of knowledge and touches to which we are referring, which God manifests to the soul that truly loves Him.<sup>7</sup>

11. The second kind of knowledge or vision of interior truths<sup>8</sup> is very different from this that we have described, since it is of things

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'And they are so efficacious.'

<sup>2</sup> So Alc. The other authorities read: 'with a sublime' [*subido* for *súbito*, as above.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'as we have said.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'it must neither strive to have them nor strive not to have them.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. adds: 'and disinterestedness.'

<sup>7</sup> A, B: 'that draws near to Him and truly loves Him.'

<sup>8</sup> A, B: 'or of interior truths.'

<sup>6</sup> St. John xiv, 21.

lower than God. And herein is included the perception of the truth of things in themselves, and that of the events and happenings which come to pass among men. And this knowledge is of such a kind that, when the soul learns these truths, they sink into it, independently of any suggestion from without, to such an extent that, although it may be given a different interpretation of them, it cannot make inward assent to this, even though it endeavour to do so by putting forth a great effort; for within the spirit it is learning otherwise through the spirit that is teaching it that thing,<sup>1</sup> which is equivalent to seeing it clearly. This pertains<sup>2</sup> to the spirit of prophecy and to the grace which Saint Paul calls the gift of the discernment of spirits.<sup>3</sup> Yet, although the soul holds something which it understands to be quite certain and true, as we have said, and although it may be unable to cease giving it that passive interior consent, it must not therefore cease to believe and to give the consent of reason to that which its spiritual director tells it and commands it,<sup>4</sup> even though this may be quite contrary to its own feelings, so that it may be directed in faith to Divine union, to which a soul must journey by believing rather than by understanding.

12. Concerning both these things we have clear testimonies in Scripture. For, with respect to the spiritual knowledge<sup>5</sup> of things that may be acquired, the Wise Man says these words: *Ipse dedit mihi horum, quæ sunt, scientiam veram, ut sciam dispositionem orbis terrarum, et virtutes elementorum, initium et consummationem temporum, vicissitudinum permutationes, et consummationes temporum, et morum mutationes, divisiones temporum, et anni cursus, et stellarum dispositiones, naturas animalium et iras bestiarum, vim ventorum, et cogitationes hominum, differentias virgultorum, et virtutes radicum, et quæcumque sunt abscondita, et improvisa didici: omnium enim artifex docuit me sapientia.*<sup>6</sup> Which signifies: God hath given me true knowledge of things that are: to know the disposition of the round world<sup>7</sup> and the virtues of the elements; the beginning, and ending, and midst of the times, the alterations in the changes<sup>8</sup> and the consummations of the seasons, and the changes of customs, the divisions of the seasons,<sup>9</sup> the courses of the

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'otherwise in that which has been spiritually represented to it.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'This may pertain.'

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians xii, 10.

<sup>4</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'as we have said, it cannot cease to follow that which its spiritual director commands.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'to the particular spiritual knowledge.'

<sup>6</sup> Wisdom vii, 17-21. The reading of the Latin text is that of Alc.

<sup>7</sup> [Lit., 'of the roundness of the lands.']

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'the changes in events.'

<sup>9</sup> A omits this phrase, and B, this and the phrase preceding.

year and the dispositions of the stars; the natures of animals, and the furies of the beasts, the strength and virtue of the winds, and the thoughts of men; the diversities in plants and trees and the virtues of roots and all things that are hidden, and those that are not foreseen<sup>1</sup>: all these I learned, for Wisdom, which is the worker of all things, taught me. And although this knowledge which the Wise Man here says that God gave him concerning all things was infused<sup>2</sup> and general, the passage quoted furnishes sufficient evidence for all particular kinds of knowledge which God infuses into souls, by supernatural means, when He wills. And this not that He may give them a general habit of knowledge as He gave to Solomon in the matters aforementioned; but that He may reveal to them at times certain truths with respect to any of all these things that the Wise Man here enumerates. Although it is true that into many souls Our Lord infuses habits which relate to many things, yet these are never of so general a kind as they were in the case of Solomon. The differences between them are like to those between the gifts distributed by God which are enumerated by Saint Paul; among these he sets wisdom, knowledge, faith, prophecy, discernment or knowledge of spirits, understanding of tongues, interpretation of spoken words, etc.<sup>3</sup> All these kinds of knowledge are infused habits,<sup>4</sup> which God gives freely to whom He will, whether naturally or supernaturally; naturally,<sup>5</sup> as to Balaam, to other idolatrous prophets and to many sybils, to whom He gave the spirit of prophecy; and supernaturally, as to the holy prophets and apostles and other saints.<sup>6</sup>

13. But over and above these habits or graces<sup>7</sup> freely bestowed,<sup>8</sup> what we say is that persons who are perfect or are making progress in perfection are wont very commonly to receive enlightenment and knowledge of things present or absent; these they know through their spirit,<sup>9</sup> which is already enlightened and purged. We can interpret that passage from the Proverbs in this sense, namely: *Quomodo in aquis resplendent vultus prospicientium sic corda hominum manifesta sunt prudentibus*.<sup>10</sup> Even as there appear in the waters the faces of those that look therein, so the hearts of men are manifest to the prudent. This is

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'and . . . foreseen.'

<sup>2</sup> A abbreviates: 'which is the worker of all things, was infused.'

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'exposition of words'; the reference is clearly to 1 Corinthians xii, 8-10.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'infused gifts.'

<sup>5</sup> Alc. alone has 'naturally.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'to whom He will, as to the holy prophets and apostles and to other saints.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'But over and above these graces.'

<sup>8</sup> [The original has *gratis datas*.]

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'through the light which they receive in their spirit.'

<sup>10</sup> Proverbs xxvii, 19.

understood of those that have the wisdom of saints, which the sacred Scripture calls prudence. And in this way these spirits sometimes learn of other things also, although not whensoever they will; for this belongs only to those that have the habit, and even to these it belongs not always and with respect to all things, for it depends upon God's will to help them.

14. But it must be known that those whose spirits are purged can learn by natural means with great readiness,<sup>1</sup> and some more readily than others, that which is in the inward spirit or heart, and the inclinations and talents of men, and this by outward indications, albeit very slight ones, as words, movements and other signs. For, even as the devil can do this, since he is spirit, even so likewise can the spiritual man, according to the words of the Apostle, who says: *Spiritualis autem judicat omnia*.<sup>2</sup> 'He that is spiritual judgeth all things.' And again he says: *Spiritus enim omnia scrutatur, etiam profunda Dei*.<sup>3</sup> 'The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.' Wherefore, although spiritual persons cannot by nature know thoughts, or things that are in the minds of others,<sup>4</sup> they may well interpret them through supernatural enlightenment or by signs. And, although they may often be deceived in their interpretation of signs, they are more generally correct. Yet we must trust neither to the one means nor to the other, for the devil meddles herein greatly, and with much subtlety, as we shall afterwards say, and thus we must ever renounce such kinds of knowledge.

15. And that spiritual persons may have knowledge of the deeds and happenings of men, even though they be elsewhere, we have witness and example in the Fourth Book of the Kings, where Giezi, the servant of our father Eliseus,<sup>5</sup> desired to hide from him the money which he had received from Naaman the Syrian, and Eliseus said: *Nonne cor meum in præsenti erat, quando reversus est homo de curru suo in occursum tui*?<sup>6</sup> 'Was not my heart perchance present, when Naaman turned back from his chariot and went to meet thee?' This happens spiritually; the spirit sees it as though it were happening in its presence. And the same thing is proved in the same book, where we read likewise of the same Eliseus, that, knowing all that the King of Syria did with his princes in his privy chamber, he told it to the King of Israel, and thus the counsels of the King of Syria were of no effect; so much so that, when the King

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'can learn with greater readiness.'

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 10.

<sup>3</sup> This phrase is found only in Alc. and e.p.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 15.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'in the interior.']

<sup>6</sup> 4 Kings [A.V., 2 Kings] v, 26.

of Syria saw that all was known, he said to his people<sup>1</sup>: Why do ye not tell me which of you is betraying me to the King of Israel? And then one of his servants said: *Nequaquam, Domine mi Rex, sed Eliseus Propheta, qui est in Israel, indicat Regi Israel omnia verba, quaecumque locutus fueris in conclavi tuo.*<sup>2</sup> 'It is not so, my lord, O king, but Eliseus, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel all the words that thou speakest in thy privy chamber.'

16. Both kinds of this knowledge of things, as well as other kinds of knowledge, come to pass<sup>3</sup> in the soul passively, so that for its own part it does naught. For it will come to pass that, when a person is inattentive to a matter and it is far from his mind, there will come to him a vivid understanding of what he is hearing or reading, and that much more clearly than could be conveyed by the sound of the words; and at times, though he understand not the words, as when they are in Latin and he knows not that tongue, the knowledge of their meaning comes to him, despite his not understanding them.

17. With regard to the deceptions which the devil can bring about, and does bring about, concerning this kind of knowledge and understanding, there is much that might be said, for the deceptions which he effects in this way are very great and very difficult to unmask. Inasmuch as, through suggestion,<sup>4</sup> he can represent to the soul many kinds of intellectual knowledge and implant them so firmly that it appears impossible that they should not be true, he will certainly cause the soul to believe innumerable falsehoods if it be not humble and cautious. For suggestion has sometimes great power over the soul, above all when it is to some extent aided by the weakness of sense, causing the knowledge which it conveys to sink into the soul with such great power, persuasiveness and determination that the soul needs to give itself earnestly to prayer and to exert great strength if it is to cast it off. For at times the devil is accustomed to represent to the soul the sins of others, and evil consciences and evil souls,<sup>5</sup> falsely but very vividly, and all this he does to harm the soul, trusting that it may spread abroad his revelations, and that thus more sins may be committed, for which reason he fills the soul with zeal by making it believe that these revelations are granted it so that it may commend the persons concerned to God. Now, though it is true that God sometimes sets before holy souls the necessities of their neighbours, so that they may commend them to

<sup>1</sup> A, B: 'to his counsellors.'

<sup>2</sup> 4 Kings [A.V., 2 Kings] vi, 12.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'Both kinds of this knowledge of things also come to pass.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds: 'making use of the bodily senses.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B: 'and the evil souls of others.'

God or relieve them, even as we read that He revealed to Jeremias the weakness of the prophet Baruch, that he might give him counsel concerning it,<sup>1</sup> yet it is more often the devil who does this, and speaks falsely about it, in order to cause infamy, sin and discouragement, whereof we have very great experience. And at other times he implants other kinds of knowledge with great assurance, and persuades the soul to believe them.

18. Such knowledge as this, whether it be of God or no, can be of very little assistance to the progress of the soul<sup>2</sup> on its journey to God if the soul desire it and be attached to it; on the contrary, if it were not scrupulous in rejecting it, not only would it be hindered on its road, but it would even be greatly harmed and led far astray. For all the perils and inconveniences which, as we have said, may be involved in the supernatural apprehensions whereof we have treated up to this point, may occur here, and more also. I will not, therefore, treat more fully of this matter here, since sufficient instruction about it has already been given in past chapters; I will<sup>3</sup> only say that the soul must always be very scrupulous in rejecting these things, and seek to journey to God by the way of unknowing; and must ever relate its experiences to its spiritual confessor, and be ever attentive to his counsel. Let the confessor guide the soul past this, laying no stress upon it, for it is of no kind of importance for<sup>4</sup> the road to union; for when these things are granted to the soul passively they always leave in it such effect as God wills shall remain, without necessity for the soul to exert any diligence in the matter.<sup>5</sup> And thus it seems to me that there is no reason to describe here either the effect which is produced by true knowledge, or that which comes from false knowledge, for this would be wearisome and never-ending. For the effects of this knowledge cannot all be described in a brief instruction, the knowledge being great and greatly varied, and its effects being so likewise, since good knowledge produces good effects, and evil knowledge, evil effects,<sup>6</sup> etc. In saying that all should be rejected,<sup>7</sup> we have said sufficient for the soul not to go astray.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jeremias xlv, 3.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'can bring very little profit to the soul.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'therefore I will . . .'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: '... laying no stress upon it, (and) treating it as of no account for . . .'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'without . . . in the matter.'

<sup>6</sup> A, B, e.p. have: '... good effects [leading] to good, and evil knowledge evil effects [leading] to evil.' Alc. ends the chapter here.

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'and how this is to be done.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'for the soul not to go astray.' We follow A and B in our reading of this last sentence.

## CHAPTER XXVII

*Which treats of the second kind of revelation, namely, the disclosure of hidden secrets.<sup>1</sup> Describes the way in which these may assist the soul toward union with God, and the way in which they may be a hindrance; and how the devil may deceive the soul greatly in this matter.*

WE were saying that the second kind of revelation was the manifestation of hidden mysteries and secrets. This may come to pass in two ways. The first with respect to that which God is in Himself, wherein is included the revelation of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity and Unity of God. The second is with respect to that which God is in His works, and herein are included the other articles of our Catholic faith,<sup>2</sup> and the propositions deducible from them which may be laid down explicitly as truths. In these are included and comprised a great number of the revelations of the prophets, of promises and threatenings of God, and of other things which have happened and shall happen concerning this matter of faith.<sup>3</sup> Under this second head we may also include many other particular things which God habitually reveals, both concerning the universe in general as also in particular concerning kingdoms, provinces and states and families and particular persons. Of these we have examples in abundance in the Divine writings, both of the one kind and of the other, especially in all the Prophets, wherein are found revelations of all these kinds. As this is a clear and plain matter, I will not here spend time in quoting these examples, but will only say<sup>4</sup> that these revelations do not come to pass by word alone, but that God gives them in many ways and manners, sometimes by word alone, sometimes by signs and figures alone, and by images and similitudes alone, sometimes in more than one way at once, as is likewise to be seen in the Prophets, particularly throughout the Apocalypse, where we find not only all the kinds of revelation which we have described, but likewise the ways and manners to which we are here referring.

2. As to these revelations which are included under our second head, God grants them still in our time to whom He will. He is wont, for example, to reveal to some persons how many days they still have

<sup>1</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'and mysteries.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'of our holy Catholic faith.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'concerning this matter of faith.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B: '... I do not speak of them; I only say ...'

to live, or what trials they are to suffer, or what is to befall such and such a person, or such and such a kingdom, etc. And even as regards the mysteries of our faith, He will reveal and expound to the spirit the truths concerning them,<sup>1</sup> although, since this has already been revealed once, it is not properly to be termed revelation, but is more correctly a manifestation or explanation of what has been revealed already.

3. In this kind of revelation<sup>2</sup> the devil may meddle freely. For, as revelations of this nature come ordinarily through words, figures and similitudes, etc., the devil may very readily counterfeit others like them, much more so than when the revelations are in spirit alone.<sup>3</sup> Wherefore, if with regard to the first and the second kind of revelation which we are here describing, as touching our faith, there be revealed to us anything new, or different, we must in no wise give our consent to it, even though we had evidence that it was spoken by an angel from Heaven.<sup>4</sup> For even so says Saint Paul, in these words: *Licet nos, aut Angelus de cælo evangelizet vobis præterquam quod evangelizavimus vobis, anathema sit.*<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: Even though an angel from Heaven declare or preach unto you aught else than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema.

4. Since, then, there are no more articles to be revealed concerning the substance of our faith than those which have already been revealed to the Church, not only must<sup>6</sup> anything new which may be revealed to the soul concerning this be rejected, but it behoves the soul<sup>7</sup> to be cautious and pay no heed to any novelties implied therein, and for the sake of the purity of the soul it behoves it to rely on faith alone. Even though the truths already revealed to it be revealed again, it will believe them, not because they are now revealed anew, but because they have already been sufficiently revealed to the Church: indeed, it must close its understanding to them, holding<sup>8</sup> simply to the doctrine of the Church and to its faith, which, as Saint Paul says, enters through hearing.<sup>9</sup> And let not its credence and intellectual assent be given to these matters of the faith which have been revealed anew, however

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'with particular light and impressiveness.'

<sup>2</sup> So the MSS. E.p. reads: 'With regard, then, to what we call revelations (for I speak not now of what has already been revealed, such as the mysteries of the faith) . . .'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'much more . . . spirit alone.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'even though . . . from Heaven.'

<sup>5</sup> Galatians i, 8.

<sup>6</sup> E.p. begins the sentence thus: 'And thus, not only must . . .'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'apart from this.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'it behoves it to rely on faith alone, closing its understanding and holding . . .'

<sup>9</sup> Romans x, 17.

fitting and true they may seem to it, if it desire not to be deceived.<sup>1</sup> For, in order to deceive the soul and to instil falsehoods into it, the devil first feeds it with truths and things that are probable in order to give it assurance and afterwards to deceive it.<sup>2</sup> He resembles one that sews leather with a bristle, first piercing the leather with the sharp bristle, after which enters the soft thread; the thread could not enter unless the bristle guided it.

5. And let this be considered carefully; for, even were it true that there was no peril in such deception, yet it greatly behoves the soul not to desire to understand clearly things that have respect to the faith,<sup>3</sup> so that it may preserve the merit of faith, in its purity and entirety, and likewise that it may come, in this night of the understanding, to the Divine light of Divine union. And it is equally necessary to consider any new revelation with one's eyes closed, and holding fast the prophecies of old, for the Apostle Saint Peter, though he had seen the glory of the Son of God after some manner<sup>4</sup> on Mount Tabor, wrote, in his canonical epistle, these words: *Et habemus firmiorem propheticum sermonem; cui benefaciitis attendentes, etc.*<sup>5</sup> Which is as though he had said: Although the vision that we have seen of Christ on the Mount is true, the word of the prophecy that is revealed to us is firmer and surer, and, if ye rest your soul upon it, ye do well.

6. And if it is true that, for the reasons already described, it behoves the soul to close its eyes to the aforementioned revelations which come to it, and which concern the propositions of the faith,<sup>6</sup> how much more necessary will it be neither to receive nor to give credit to other revelations relating to different things, wherein the devil habitually meddles so freely that I believe it impossible<sup>7</sup> for a man not to be deceived in many of them unless he strive to reject them, such an appearance of truth and security does the devil give them? For he brings together so many appearances and probabilities, in order that they may be believed, and plants them so firmly in the sense and the imagination, that it seems to the person affected that what he says will certainly happen; and in such a way does he cause the soul to grasp and hold them, that, if it

<sup>1</sup> E.p. has 'be easily given,' and omits 'of the faith' and 'however fitting and true they may seem to it.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and afterwards to deceive it.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'that have respect to the faith.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits these three words.

<sup>5</sup> 2 St. Peter i, 19.

<sup>6</sup> So Alc. A, B: 'to close its eyes to the things that happen which concern the propositions or new revelations of the faith.' E.p.: 'not to open its eyes curiously to the new revelations which come to it and which concern the propositions of the faith.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'I believe it almost impossible.'

have not humility, it will hardly be persuaded to reject them and made to believe the contrary. Wherefore, the soul that is pure, cautious, simple and humble must resist revelations and other visions with as much effort and care as though they were very perilous temptations.<sup>1</sup> For there is no need to desire them; on the contrary, there is need not to desire them, if we are to reach the union of love. It is this that Solomon meant when he said: 'What need has a man to desire and seek things that are above his natural capacity?'<sup>2</sup> As though we were to say: He has<sup>3</sup> no necessity, in order to be perfect, to desire supernatural things<sup>4</sup> by supernatural means, which are above his capacity.<sup>5</sup>

7. And as the objections that can be made to this have already been answered, in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of this book, I refer the reader to these, saying only that the soul must keep itself from all revelations<sup>6</sup> in order to journey, in purity and without error, in the night of faith, to union.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

*Which treats of interior locutions that may come to the spirit supernaturally. Says of what kinds they are:*

THE discreet reader has ever need to bear in mind the intent and end which I have in this book, which is the direction of the soul, through all its apprehensions, natural and supernatural, without deception or hindrance, in purity of faith, to Divine union with God. If he does this, he will understand that, although with respect to apprehensions of the soul and the doctrine that I am expounding I give not such copious instruction neither do I particularize so much or make so many divisions as the understanding perchance requires, I am not being over-brief in this matter. For with respect to all this I believe that sufficient cautions, explanations and instructions are given for the soul to be enabled to behave prudently in every contingency, outward

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'with as . . . temptations.'

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastes vii, 1. E.p. omits 'natural.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'Man has.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'supernatural and extraordinary things.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B add: 'for perfection.'

<sup>6</sup> So Alc. A, B read: 'I refer [the reader] to them in that which touches this matter of revelations; for it is sufficient to know that it behoves the soul to keep itself from them all. . . . E.p.: ' . . . referring [the reader] to them, I cease as touching this matter of revelations; for it is sufficient to know that it behoves the soul to keep itself prudently from them all. . . .'

or inward, so as to make progress. And this is the reason why I have so briefly dismissed the subject of prophetic apprehensions and the other subjects allied to it; for there is so much more to be said of each of them, according to the differences and the ways and manners<sup>1</sup> that are wont to be observed in each,<sup>2</sup> that I believe one could never know it all perfectly. I am content that, as I believe, the substance and the doctrine thereof have been given, and the soul has been warned of the caution which it behoves it to exercise in this respect, and also concerning all other things of the same kind that may come to pass within it.

2. I will now follow the same course with regard to the third kind of apprehension, which, we said, was that of supernatural locutions,<sup>3</sup> which are apt to come to the spirits of spiritual persons<sup>4</sup> without the intervention of any bodily sense. These, although they are of many kinds, may, I believe, all be reduced to three, namely: successive, formal and substantial. I describe as successive certain words and arguments which the spirit is wont to form and fashion when it is inwardly recollected. Formal words are certain clear and distinct words<sup>5</sup> which the spirit receives, not from itself, but from a third person, sometimes when it is recollected and sometimes when it is not. Substantial words are others which also come to the spirit formally, sometimes when it is recollected and sometimes when it is not; these cause in the substance of the soul<sup>6</sup> that substance and virtue which they signify. All these we shall here proceed to treat in their order.

## CHAPTER XXIX

*Which treats of the first kind of words that the recollected spirit sometimes forms within itself. Describes the cause of these and the profit and the harm which there may be in them.*

THESE successive words always come when the spirit is recollected and absorbed very attentively in some meditation; and, in its reflections upon that same matter whereon it is thinking, it proceeds from one stage to another, forming<sup>7</sup> words and

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'and manners.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'in each.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. has 'apprehensions' for 'locutions.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'the spirits of.' A, B have 'may' for 'are wont to.'

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'certain distinct and formal words.']

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'in the inmost part of the soul.'

<sup>7</sup> A, B have 'founding' for 'forming.'

arguments which are very much to the point, with great facility and distinctness, and by means of its reasoning discovers<sup>1</sup> things which it knew not with respect to the subject of its reflections, so that it seems not to be doing this itself, but rather it seems that another person is supplying the reasoning within its mind or answering its questions or teaching it. And in truth it has good cause for thinking this, for the soul itself is reasoning with itself and answering itself as though it were two persons conversing together; and in some ways this is really so; for, although it is the spirit itself that works as an instrument,<sup>2</sup> the Holy Spirit oftentimes aids it to produce and form those true reasonings, words and conceptions. And thus it utters them to itself as though to a third person. For, as at that time the understanding is recollected and united with the truth of that whereon it is thinking, and the Divine Spirit is likewise united with it in that truth, as it is always united in all truth,<sup>3</sup> it follows that, when the understanding communicates in this way with the Divine Spirit by means of this truth, it begins to form within itself, successively, those other truths which are connected with that whereon it is thinking, the door being opened to it and illumination being given to it continually by the Holy Spirit Who teaches it. For this is one of the ways wherein the Holy Spirit teaches.

2. And when the understanding is illumined and taught in this way by this master, and comprehends these truths, it begins of its own accord<sup>4</sup> to form the words which relate to the truths that are communicated to it from elsewhere. So that we may say that the voice is the voice of Jacob and the hands are the hands of Esau.<sup>5</sup> And one that is in this condition will be unable to believe that this is so, but will think that the sayings and the words come from a third person. For such a one knows not the facility with which the understanding can form words inwardly, as though they came from a third person, and having reference to conceptions and truths which have in fact been communicated to it by a third person.

3. And although it is true that, in this communication and enlightenment of the understanding, no deception is produced in the soul itself, nevertheless, deception may, and does, frequently occur in the formal words and reasonings which the understanding bases upon it. For, inasmuch as this illumination which it receives is at times very subtle and spiritual, so that the understanding cannot attain to a clear apprehen-

<sup>1</sup> B has 'reflects upon' [*discurriendo*] for 'discovers' [*descubriendo*].

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'as an instrument.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'of its own accord.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'in that . . . all truth.'

<sup>5</sup> Genesis xxvii, 22.

sion of it, and it is the understanding that, as we say, forms the reasonings of its own accord, it follows that those which it forms are frequently false, and on other occasions are only apparently true, or are imperfect. For since at the outset the soul began to seize the truth, and then brought into play the skilfulness or the clumsiness of its own weak understanding, its perception of the truth may easily be modified by the instability of its own faculties of comprehension, and act all the time exactly as though a third person were speaking.

4. I knew a person who had these successive locutions: among them were some very true and substantial ones concerning the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, but others were sheer heresy.<sup>1</sup> And I am appalled at what happens in these days—namely, when some soul with the very smallest experience<sup>2</sup> of meditation, if it be conscious of certain locutions of this kind in some state of recollection, at once christens them all as coming from God, and assumes that this is the case, saying: ‘God said to me . . .’; ‘God answered me . . .’; whereas it is not so at all, but, as we have said, it is for the most part they who are saying these things to themselves.

5. And, over and above this, the desire which people have for locutions, and the pleasure which comes to their spirits from them, lead them to make answer to themselves and then to think that it is God Who is answering them and speaking to them. They therefore commit great blunders unless they impose a strict restraint upon themselves, and unless their director obliges them to abstain from these kinds of reflection. For they are apt to gain from them mere nonsensical talk and impurity of soul rather than humility and mortification of spirit, if they think, ‘This was indeed a great thing’ and ‘God was speaking’; whereas it will have been little more than nothing, or nothing at all, or less than nothing. For, if humility and charity be not engendered by such experiences, and mortification and holy simplicity and silence, etc., what can be the value of them? I say, then, that these things may hinder the soul greatly in its progress to Divine union because, if it pay heed to them, it is led far astray from the abyss of faith, where the understanding must remain in darkness, and must journey in darkness, by love and in faith, and not by much reasoning.

6. And if you ask me why the understanding must be deprived of

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: ‘but others contained much error.’

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, ‘with four maravedis’ worth of experience.’ The *maravedí* was a small coin, worth 1/375 of a gold ducat, the unit of coinage at this time in Castile.]

these truths, since through them it is illumined by the Spirit of God, and thus they<sup>1</sup> cannot be evil, I reply that the Holy Spirit illumines the understanding which is recollected, and illumines it according to the manner of its recollection,<sup>2</sup> and that the understanding cannot find any other and greater recollection than in faith; and thus the Holy Spirit will illumine it in naught more than in faith. For the purer and the more refined in faith<sup>3</sup> is the soul, the more it has of the infused charity of God; and the more charity it has, the more is it illumined and the more gifts of the Holy Spirit are communicated to it, for charity is the cause and the means whereby they are communicated to it.<sup>4</sup> And although it is true that, in this illumination of truths, the Holy Spirit communicates a certain light to the soul, this is nevertheless as different in quality from that which is in faith, wherein is no clear understanding, as is the most precious gold from the basest metal; and, with regard to its quantity,<sup>5</sup> the one is as much greater than the other as the sea is greater than a drop of water. For in the one manner there is communicated to the soul wisdom concerning one or two or three truths, etc., but in the other there is communicated to it all the wisdom of God in general, which is the Son of God, Who communicates Himself to the soul in faith.<sup>6</sup>

7. And if you tell me that this is all good, and that the one impedes not the other, I reply that it impedes it greatly if the soul sets store by it; for to do this is to occupy itself with things which are clear and of little importance, yet which are sufficient to hinder the communication of the abyss of faith, wherein God supernaturally and secretly instructs the soul, and exalts it in virtues and gifts in a way that it knows not. And the profit which these successive communications will bring us cannot come by our deliberately applying the understanding to them, for if we do this they will rather lead us astray, even as Wisdom says to the soul in the *Songs*: 'Turn away thine eyes from me, for they make

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and thus it.']

<sup>2</sup> This profound and important principle, which has often been developed in mystical theology, is well expounded by P. José de Jesús María in a treatise called *Reply to a question [Respuesta a una duda]*. Here, among other things, he says: 'As St. Thomas proves (*De Veritate*, q. 12, a. 6), Divine illumination, like every other spiritual form, is communicated to the soul after the manner of the receiver of it, whether according to sense or according to spirit, to the particular or to the universal. And thus, he that receives it must prepare himself for it to be communicated to him further, whether in small measure (as we say) or according to sense, or in large measure or intellectually.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'in perfection of living faith.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits 'of the Holy Spirit' and 'for charity . . . communicated to it.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'and, as to the abundance of its light.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'in general, by a simple and universal knowledge which is given to the soul in faith.'

me to fly away.<sup>1</sup> That is to say: They make me to fly far away from thee and to set myself higher. We must therefore not apply the understanding<sup>2</sup> to that which is being supernaturally communicated to it, but simply and sincerely apply the will to God with love,<sup>3</sup> for it is through love that these good things are communicated and through love they will be communicated in greater abundance than before. For if the ability of the natural<sup>4</sup> understanding or of other faculties be brought actively to bear upon these things which are communicated supernaturally and passively, its imperfect nature will not reach them, and thus they will perforce be modified according to the capacity of the understanding, and consequently will perforce be changed; and thus the understanding will necessarily go astray<sup>5</sup> and begin to form reasonings within itself, and there will no longer be anything supernatural or any semblance thereof, but all will be merely natural and most erroneous and unworthy.

8. But there are certain types of understanding so quick and subtle that, when they become recollected during some meditation, they invent conceptions, and begin naturally, and with great facility, to form these conceptions into the most lifelike words and arguments, which they think, without any doubt, come from God. Yet all the time they come only from the understanding, which, with its natural illumination, being to some extent freed from the operation of the senses, is able to effect all this, and more, without any supernatural aid. This happens very commonly, and many persons are greatly deceived by it, thinking that they have attained to a high degree of prayer and are receiving communications from God, wherefore they either write this down or cause<sup>6</sup> it to be written. And it turns out<sup>7</sup> to be nothing, and to have the substance of no virtue, and it serves only to encourage them in vanity.

9. Let these persons learn to be intent upon naught, save only upon grounding the will in humble love, working diligently, suffering and thus imitating the Son of God in His life and mortifications,<sup>8</sup> for it is by this road that a man will come to all spiritual good, rather than by much inward reasoning.

10. In this type of locution—namely, in successive interior words—

<sup>1</sup> [Canticles vi, 4.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'the strength of the understanding.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'apply the will to the love of God.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits 'natural.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'will necessarily be in peril of straying.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: '... from God, and they write down what happens to them or cause ...'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'And it all turns out ...'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'in His life, and mortifying themselves in all things.'

the devil frequently intervenes, especially in the case of such as have some inclination or affection for them. At times when such persons begin to be recollected, the devil is accustomed to offer them ample material for distractions, forming conceptions or words by suggestion in their understanding, and then corrupting<sup>1</sup> and deceiving it most subtly with things that have every appearance of being true. And this is one of the manners wherein he communicates<sup>2</sup> with those who have made some implicit or expressed compact with him; as with certain heretics, especially with certain heresiarchs, whose understanding he fills with most subtle, false and erroneous conceptions and arguments.

11. From what has been said, it is evident that these successive locutions may proceed in the understanding from three causes, namely: from the Divine Spirit, Who moves and illumines the understanding; from the natural illumination of the same understanding; and from the devil, who may speak to the soul by suggestion. To describe<sup>3</sup> now the signs and indications by which a man may know when they proceed from one cause and when from another would be somewhat difficult, as also to give examples and indications.<sup>4</sup> It is quite possible, however, to give some general signs, which are these. When in its words and conceptions the soul finds itself loving God, and at the same time is conscious not only of love but also of humility and reverence, it is a sign that the Holy Spirit is working within it, for, whensoever He grants favours, He grants them with this accompaniment.<sup>5</sup> When the locutions proceed solely from the vivacity and brilliance of the understanding, it is the understanding that accomplishes everything, without the operation of the virtues (although the will, in the knowledge and illumination of those truths, may love naturally); and, when the meditation is over, the will remains dry, albeit inclined neither to vanity nor to evil, unless the devil should tempt it afresh about this matter. This, however, is not the case when the locutions have been prompted by a good spirit; for then, as a rule, the will is afterwards affectioned to God and inclined to well-doing. At certain times, nevertheless, it will happen that, although the communication has been the work of a good spirit, the will remains in aridity, since God ordains it so for certain causes which are of assistance to the soul. At other times the soul will not be very conscious of the operations or motions of those virtues, yet that

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and then throwing it down.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'It is in this way that he is wont to communicate . . .'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'But to describe.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'examples and signs.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'He grants them wrapped up in this.']

which it has experienced will be good. Wherefore I say that the difference between these locutions is sometimes difficult to recognize, by reason of the varied effects which they produce; but these which have now been described are the most common, although sometimes they occur in greater abundance and sometimes in less. But those that come from the devil are sometimes difficult to understand and recognize, for, although it is true that as a rule they leave the will in aridity with respect to love of God, and the mind inclined to vanity, self-esteem or complacency, nevertheless they sometimes inspire the soul with a false humility and a fervent affection of the will rooted in self-love, so that at times a person must be extremely spiritually-minded to recognize it. And this the devil does in order the better to protect himself; for he knows very well how sometimes<sup>1</sup> to produce tears by the feelings which he inspires in a soul, in order that he may continue to implant in it the affections that he desires. But he always strives to move its will so that it may esteem those interior communications, attach great importance to them, and, as a result, give itself up to them and be occupied in that which is not virtue, but is rather the occasion of losing such virtue as the soul may have.

12. Let us remember, then, this necessary caution, both as to the one type of locution and as to the other, so that we may not be deceived or hindered by them. Let us treasure none of them, but think only of learning to direct our will determinedly to God, fulfilling His law and His holy counsels perfectly, which is the wisdom of the Saints, and contenting ourselves with knowing the mysteries and truths with the simplicity and truth wherewith the Church sets them before us. For this is sufficient to enkindle the will greatly, so that we need not pry into other deep and curious<sup>2</sup> things wherein it is a wonder if there is no peril. For with respect to this Saint Paul says: It is not fitting to know more than it behoves us<sup>3</sup> to know.<sup>4</sup> And let this suffice with respect to this matter of successive words.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits 'sometimes.'

<sup>2</sup> A, B omit: 'and curious.'

<sup>3</sup> [The verbs used in the Spanish for 'is fitting' and 'behoves' are the same.]

<sup>4</sup> Romans xii, 3.

## CHAPTER XXX

*Which treats of the interior words that come to the spirit formally by supernatural means. Warns the reader of the harm which they may do and of the caution that is necessary in order that the soul may not be deceived by them.*

THE interior words belonging to the second type are formal words, which at certain times come to the spirit by supernatural means, without the intervention of any of the senses, sometimes when the spirit is recollected and at other times when it is not. I call them formal because they are communicated to the spirit formally by a third person,<sup>1</sup> the spirit itself playing no part in this. And they are therefore very different from those which we have just described; because not only is there this difference, that they come without any such intervention of the spirit itself as takes place in the other case; but also, as I say, they sometimes come when the spirit is not recollected and even when it is far from thinking of the subject of what is being said to it. This is not so in the first type of locution—namely, that of successive words—which always has some relation to the subject which the soul is considering.

2. These words are sometimes very clearly formed and sometimes less so; for they are frequently like conceptions in which something is said to the spirit, whether in the form of a reply to it or in that of another manner of address. Sometimes there is only one word; sometimes there are two or more; sometimes the words succeed one another like those already described, for they are apt to be continuous, either instructing the soul or discussing something with it; and all this comes to pass without any part being played therein by the spirit, for it is just as though one person were speaking with another. In this way, we read, it came to pass with Daniel, who says that the angel spoke within him.<sup>2</sup> This was a formal and successive discourse within his spirit, which instructed him, even as the angel declared at the time, saying that he had come to instruct him.

3. When these words are no more than formal, the effect which they produce upon the soul is not great. For ordinarily they serve only to instruct or illumine with respect to one thing; and, in order to produce this effect, it is not necessary that they should produce any

<sup>1</sup> A, B: 'because it seems to the spirit that a third person communicates them formally.'

<sup>2</sup> Daniel ix, 22.

other effect more efficacious than the purpose to which they are leading. And when they are of God they invariably work this in the soul; for they make it ready and quick to do that which it is commanded or instructed to do; yet at times they take not from it the repugnance or the difficulty which it feels, but are rather wont to increase these, according as God ordains for the better instruction, increased humility and greater good of the soul. And this repugnance most commonly occurs when the soul is commanded to do things of a high order, or things of a kind that may exalt it; when things are commanded it that conduce to its greater lowliness and humility, it responds with more readiness and ease. And thus we read in Exodus that, when God commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh and deliver the people, he showed such great repugnance that He had to command him three times to do it and to perform signs for him; and all this was of no avail until God gave him Aaron for a companion to take part of the honour.<sup>1</sup>

4. When, on the other hand, the words and communications are of the devil, it comes to pass that the soul responds with more ease and readiness to things that are of greater weight,<sup>2</sup> and for lowlier things it conceives repugnance. The fact is that God so greatly abhors seeing souls attracted by high position that, even when He commands and obliges them to accept such positions, He desires them not to be ready and anxious to command. It is this readiness which God commonly inspires in the soul, through these formal words, that constitutes one great difference between them and those other successive words: the latter move not the spirit so much, neither do they inspire it with such readiness, since they are less formal, and since the understanding has more to do with them. Nevertheless successive words may sometimes produce a greater effect by reason of the close communication that there is at times between the Divine Spirit and the human. It is in the manner of their coming that there is a great difference between the two kinds of locution. With respect to formal words the soul can have no doubt as to whether or no it is pronouncing them itself, for it sees quite clearly that it is not, especially when it has not been thinking of the subject of that which has been said to it; and even when it has been so thinking it feels very clearly and distinctly that the words come from elsewhere.

5. The soul must no more attach importance to all these formal words than to the other, or successive, words; for, apart from the fact

<sup>1</sup> Exodus iii, iv.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'greater worth.'] A, B: 'greater truth and worth.'

that to do so would occupy the spirit with that which is not a legitimate and proximate means to union with God—namely, faith—it might also very easily cause it to be deceived by the devil. For sometimes it is hardly possible to know what words are spoken by a good spirit, and what by an evil spirit. By their effects they can hardly be distinguished at all, since neither kind produces effects of much importance: sometimes, indeed, with imperfect souls, words which come from the devil have more efficacy<sup>1</sup> than have these others, which come from a good spirit, with souls that are spiritual. The soul, then, must take no account of what these words may express, nor attach any importance to them, whether the spirit from which they come be good or evil. But the words must be repeated to an experienced confessor, or to a discreet and learned person, that he may give instruction and see what it is well to do, and impart his advice; and the soul must behave, with regard to them, in a resigned and negative way. And, if such an expert person cannot be found, it is better to attach no importance to these words<sup>2</sup> and to repeat them to nobody; for it is easy to find persons who will ruin the soul rather than edify it. Souls must not be given into the charge of any kind of director, since in so grave a matter it is of the greatest importance whether one goes astray or acts rightly.

6. And let it be carefully noted that a soul should never act according to its own opinion or accept anything of what these locutions express, without much reflection and without taking advice of another.<sup>3</sup> For strange and subtle deceptions may arise in this matter; so much so that I myself believe that the soul that does not set itself against accepting such things cannot fail to be deceived by many of them.<sup>4</sup>

7. And since we have treated of these deceptions and perils, and of the caution to be observed with regard to them, in Chapters seventeen, eighteen, nineteen and twenty of this book, I refer the reader to these and say no more on this matter here; I only repeat that my chief instruction is that the soul should attach no importance to these things in any way.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A, e.p.: 'more sensible efficacy.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'it is better to take the substantial and secure part of what these words bring, and otherwise to attach no importance to them.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'of another.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'either to a small, or to a great extent.'

<sup>5</sup> So Alc. A, B: '... my chief instruction, and the surest, to this end, is that the soul should attach no importance whatever to these things, however highly it may think of them, but should be guided in all things by reason and by what the Church has already taught us and teaches us daily.'

## CHAPTER XXXI

*Which treats of the substantial words that come interiorly to the spirit. Describes the difference between them and formal words, and the profit which they bring and the resignation and respect which the soul must observe with regard to them.*<sup>1</sup>

THE third kind of interior words, we said, is called substantial. These substantial words, although they are likewise formal, since they are impressed upon the soul in a definitely formal way, differ, nevertheless, in that substantial words produce vivid and substantial effects upon the soul, whereas words which are merely formal do not. So that, although it is true that every substantial word is formal, every formal word is not therefore substantial, but only, as we said above, such a word as impresses substantially<sup>2</sup> on the soul that which it signifies. It is as if Our Lord were to say formally to the soul: 'Be thou good'; it would then substantially be good. Or as if He were to say to it: 'Love thou Me'; it would then have and feel within itself the substance of love for God.<sup>3</sup> Or as if it feared greatly and He said to it: 'Fear thou not'; it would at once feel within itself great fortitude and tranquillity. For the saying of God, and His word, as the Wise Man says, is full of power;<sup>4</sup> and thus that which He says to the soul He produces substantially within it. For it is this that David meant when he said: 'See, He will give to His voice a voice of virtue.'<sup>5</sup> And even so with Abraham, when He said to him: 'Walk in My presence and be perfect':<sup>6</sup> he was then perfect and walked ever in the fear of God. And this is the power of His word in the Gospel, wherewith He healed the sick, raised the dead, etc., by no more than a word. And after this

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is notable for the hardly surpassable clarity and precision with which the Saint defines substantial locutions. Some critics, however, have found fault with him for saying that the soul should not fear these locutions, but accept them humbly and passively, since they depend wholly on God. The reply is that, when God favours the soul with these locutions, its own restless effort can only impede His work in it, as has already been said. The soul is truly co-operating with God by preparing itself with resignation and humble affection to receive His favours: it should not, as some critics have asserted, remain completely inactive. As to the fear of being deceived by these locutions, both St. Thomas and all the principal commentators are in conformity with the Saint's teaching. St. Teresa, too, took the same attitude as St. John of the Cross. Cf. her *Life*, Chap. xxv, and *Interior Castle*, VI, iii.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'impresses truly.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. modifies thus: 'Or as if He were to say formally to the soul: "Love thou Me": it would then have and feel within itself impulses of love for God.' The edition of 1630 has: '... the substance of love—that is, true love of God,' reading otherwise as in the text.

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes viii, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxvii, 34 [A.V., lxviii, 33].

<sup>6</sup> Genesis xvii, 1.

manner He gives certain souls locutions which are substantial ; and they are of such moment and price that they are life and virtue and incomparable good to the soul ; for one of these words works<sup>1</sup> greater good within the soul than all that the soul itself has done throughout its life.

2. With respect to these words, the soul should do nothing. It should neither desire them nor refrain from desiring them ; it should neither reject them nor fear them. It should do nothing<sup>2</sup> in the way of executing what these words express, for these substantial words are never pronounced by God in order that the soul may translate them into action, but that He may so translate them within the soul ; herein they differ from formal and successive words. And I say that the soul must neither desire nor refrain from desiring, since its desire is not necessary for God to translate these words into effect, nor is it sufficient for the soul to refrain from desiring in order for the said effect not to be produced. Let the soul rather be resigned and humble with respect to them. It must not reject them,<sup>3</sup> since the effect of these words remains substantially within it and is full of the good which comes from God. As the soul receives this good passively, its action is at no time of any importance. Nor should it fear any deception ; for neither the understanding nor the devil can intervene herein, nor can they succeed<sup>4</sup> in passively producing this substantial effect in the soul, in such a way that the effect and habit of the locution may be impressed upon it, unless the soul should have given itself to the devil by a voluntary compact, and he should have dwelt in it as its master, and impressed upon it these effects, not of good, but of evil.<sup>5</sup> Inasmuch as that soul would be already voluntarily united to him in perversity, the devil might easily impress upon it the effects of his sayings and words with evil intent.<sup>6</sup> For we see by experience that in many things and even upon good souls he works great violence, by means of suggestion, making his suggestions very efficacious ; and if they were evil he might

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'perhaps.'

<sup>2</sup> Alc. omits: 'It should neither desire . . . should do nothing.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. abbreviates this paragraph thus: 'With respect to these words, the soul should itself do nothing and desire nothing at the time, but conduct itself with resignation and humility, giving its free consent to God ; neither should it reject anything, nor fear anything. It should not labour in executing what these words express, for by these substantial words God works in the soul ; wherein they differ from formal and successive words. It must not reject them,' etc.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'nor can this evil one succeed . . .'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. has (for 'unless the soul . . . of evil'): 'although in souls that were given to the devil by a voluntary compact, in whom he dwelt as their master, he could by suggestion impel them to [produce] results of great malignity.'

<sup>6</sup> So A, B. Alc. omits this sentence. E.p. has: 'For, as such souls would already be voluntarily united to him in perversity, the devil could easily impel them thereto.'

work in them the consummation of these suggestions.<sup>1</sup> But he cannot leave upon a soul effects similar to those of locutions which are good; for there is no comparison between the locutions of the devil and those of God. The former are all as though they were not, in comparison with the latter, neither do they produce any effect at all compared with the effect of these. For this cause God says through Jeremias: 'What has the chaff to do with the wheat? Are not My words perchance as fire, and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?'<sup>2</sup> And thus these substantial words are greatly conducive to the union of the soul with God; and the more interior they are, the more substantial are they, and the greater is the profit that they bring. Happy is the soul to whom God addresses these words. Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.<sup>3</sup>

## CHAPTER XXXII

*Which treats of the apprehensions received by the understanding from interior feelings which come supernaturally to the soul. Describes their cause, and the manner wherein the soul must conduct itself so that they may not obstruct its road to union with God.*

IT is now time to treat of the fourth and last kind of intellectual apprehension which we said might come to the understanding through the spiritual feelings which are frequently produced supernaturally in the souls of spiritual persons and which we count amongst the distinct apprehensions of the understanding.

2. These distinct spiritual feelings may be of two kinds. The first kind is in the affection of the will. The second, in the substance of the soul.<sup>4</sup> Each of these may be of many kinds. Those of the will, when they are of God, are most sublime; but those that are of the substance of the soul are very high and of great good and profit.<sup>5</sup> As to these, neither the soul nor he that treats with it can know or understand the cause whence they proceed, or what are the acts whereby God may grant it these favours; for they depend not upon any works performed by the soul, nor upon its meditations, although both these things are a good

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'he might impel them more violently still.'

<sup>2</sup> Jeremias xxiii, 28-9. A, B, e.p. read 'stones' for 'rocks.'

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] iii, 10.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'The second, feelings that, though they are also in the will, are most intense, sublime, profound and secret, and therefore seem not to touch the will, but to be wrought in the substance of the soul.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'but the second are very high and of great good and profit.'

preparation for them: God grants these favours to whom He wills and for what reason He wills.<sup>1</sup> For it may come to pass that a person will have performed many good works, yet that He will not give him these touches of His favour; and another will have done far fewer good works, yet He will give him them to a most sublime degree and in great abundance. And thus it is not needful that the soul should be actually employed and occupied in spiritual things (although it is much better that it should be so employed if it is to have these favours) for God to give it these touches in which the soul experiences the said feelings; for in the majority of cases the soul is completely heedless of them. Of these touches, some are distinct and pass quickly away; others are less distinct and last longer.

3. These feelings, inasmuch as they are feelings only,<sup>2</sup> belong not to the understanding but to the will; and thus I refrain, of set purpose, from treating of them here, nor shall I do so until we treat of the night and purgation of the will in its affections: this will be in the third book, which follows this.<sup>3</sup> But since frequently, and even in the majority of cases, apprehensions and knowledge and intelligence overflow from them into the understanding, it would be well to make mention of them here, for that reason only. It must be known, then, that from these feelings, both from those of the will and from those which are in the substance of the soul, whether<sup>4</sup> they are caused suddenly by the touches of God, or are durable and successive, an apprehension of knowledge or intelligence frequently overflows, as I say, into the understanding; and this is normally a most sublime perception of God, most delectable to the understanding, to which no name can be given, any more than to the feeling whence it overflows. And these manifestations of knowledge are sometimes of one kind and sometimes of another; sometimes they are clearer and more sublime, according to the nature of the touches which come from God and which produce the feelings whence they proceed, and according also to their individual characteristics.<sup>5</sup>

4. It is unnecessary here to spend a great store of words<sup>6</sup> in caution-

<sup>1</sup> A, B: 'and how He wills.' Note that the Saint does not deprecate good works, as did the Illuminists [*alumbrados*], who bade the perfect soul set them aside for contemplation, even though they were works of obligation. On the contrary, he asserts that good works have a definite, though a preparatory, part to play in the life of a contemplative.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... they are feelings only of the kind whereof we here speak ...'

<sup>3</sup> Alc. alone has: 'which follows this.' The Saint does not, in fact, return to this matter, either in the third book or elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'that from all these feelings, whether ...'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'to their capacity.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'to spend many words.'

ing and directing the understanding, through these manifestations of knowledge, in faith, to union with God. For albeit the feelings which we have described are produced passively in the soul, without any effective assistance to that end on its own part, even so likewise is the knowledge of them received passively in the understanding, in a way called by the philosophers 'passible,' wherein the understanding plays no part. Wherefore, in order not to go astray on their account nor to impede the profit which comes from them, the understanding must do nothing in connection with these feelings, but must conduct itself passively,<sup>1</sup> and not interfere by applying to them its natural capacity. For, as we have said is the case with successive locutions, the understanding, with its activity, would very easily disturb and ruin the effect of these delicate manifestations of knowledge, which are a delectable supernatural intelligence that human nature cannot attain or apprehend by its own efforts, but only by remaining in a state of receptivity.<sup>2</sup> And thus the soul must not strive to attain them or desire to receive them,<sup>3</sup> lest the understanding should form other manifestations of its own, or the devil should make his entry with still more that are different from them and false. This he may very well do by means<sup>4</sup> of the feelings aforementioned, or of those which he can himself infuse into the soul that devotes itself to these kinds of knowledge.<sup>5</sup> Let the soul be resigned, humble and passive herein, for, since it receives this knowledge passively from God, He will communicate it whensoever He is pleased, if He sees the soul to be humble and detached. And in this way the soul will do nothing to counteract the help which these kinds of knowledge give it in its progress toward Divine union, which help is great; for these touches are all touches of union, which is wrought passively in the soul.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds here: 'inclining the will to free consent and gratitude.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'or apprehend by doing, but by receiving.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'or desire to receive them.'

<sup>4</sup> The edition of 1630 has: '. . . do in the soul, when it gives itself to these kinds of knowledge, by means . . .'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. substitutes for 'or of those . . . kinds of knowledge' the words: 'making use of the bodily senses.'

<sup>6</sup> Some editions here add a long paragraph, which, however, is the work of P. Jerónimo de San José, who was responsible for the edition of 1630. It appears neither in the MSS. nor in e.p. It runs as follows:

All the instruction which has been given in this book on total abstraction and passive contemplation, wherein, oblivious to all created things and detached from images and figures, we allow ourselves to be guided by God, dwelling with simple regard upon supreme truth, is applicable not only to that act of most perfect contemplation, the lofty and wholly supernatural repose of which is still prevented by the daughters of Jerusalem (namely, good reflections and meditations), if at that time the soul desires them, but also to the whole of the time during which Our Lord

5. What has been said concerning this suffices, for no matter what may happen to the soul with respect to the understanding, cautions and instructions have been given it in the sections already mentioned. And although a case may appear to be different and to be in no way included herein, there is none that cannot be referred to one of these, and thus may be deduced the instruction necessary for it.<sup>1</sup>

communicates the simple, general and loving attentiveness aforementioned, or during which the soul, aided by grace, places itself in that state. For at that time the soul must always strive to keep its understanding in repose, without the interference of other forms, figures or particular kinds of knowledge, save very fleetingly and quite superficially; and it must have a loving sweetness which will enkindle it ever more. But, except at this time, in all its exercises, acts and works, the soul must make use of good meditations and remembrances, so as to experience the greater devotion and profit, most of all with respect to the life, passion and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ, so that its actions, practices and life may be made like to His.

<sup>1</sup> Thus Alc. A, B, e.p. read: 'This suffices to conclude (our treatment of) the supernatural apprehensions of the understanding, so far as concerns the guidance of the understanding, by their means, in faith, to Divine union. And I think that what has been said with regard to this suffices, for, no matter what happens to the soul with respect to the understanding, instructions and cautions concerning it will be found in the sections already mentioned. And, if something should happen, apparently so different that none of them deals with it (although I think there will be nothing relating to the understanding which cannot be referred to one of the four kinds of distinct knowledge), instructions and cautions concerning it can be deduced from what has been said of others similar to it. And with this we will pass to the third book, where, with the Divine favour, we shall treat of the interior spiritual purgation of the will with regard to its interior affections which we here call active night.'

C, D have: 'From what has been said may be deduced instructions and cautions for guidance in whatever may happen to the soul with regard to the understanding, even if it seem so different that it includes none of the four distinct kinds, although I think there will be nothing relating to the understanding which cannot be referred to one of them. And so we will pass to the third book.'

The edition of 1630 follows A, B and e.p., and adds further: 'I therefore beg the discreet reader to read these things in a benevolent and simple spirit; for, when this spirit is not present, however sublime and perfect be the instruction, it will not yield the profit that it contains, nor will it earn the esteem that it merits. How much truer is this in the present case, since my style is in so many ways deficient!'

## BOOK THE THIRD

*Which treats of the purgation of the active night of the memory and will. Gives instruction how the soul is to behave with respect to the apprehensions of these two faculties, that it may come to union with God, according to the two faculties aforementioned, in perfect hope and charity.*<sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER I

THE first faculty of the soul, which is the understanding, has now been instructed, through all its apprehensions, in the first theological virtue, which is faith, to the end that, according to this faculty, the soul may be united with God by means of the purity of faith. It now remains to do likewise with respect to the other two faculties of the soul, which are memory and will, and to purify them likewise with respect to their apprehensions, to the end that, according to these two faculties also, the soul may come to union with God in perfect hope and charity. This will briefly be effected in this third book. We have now concluded our treatment of the understanding, which is the receptacle of all other objects according to its mode of operation;<sup>2</sup> and in treating of this we have gone a great part of the whole way. It is therefore unnecessary for us to write at equal length with respect to these faculties;<sup>3</sup> for it is not possible that, if the spiritual man instructs his understanding in faith according to the doctrine which has been given him, he should not, in so doing, instruct the other two faculties in the other two virtues likewise; for the operations of each faculty depend upon the others.

2. But since, in order to follow our manner of procedure, and in order, too, that we may be the better understood, we must necessarily speak of the proper and determinate matter, we shall here be obliged to

<sup>1</sup> So Alc., A, B. This first chapter, in e.p., is called the 'Argument' of the book, and the numbering of the chapters differs correspondingly from that of the MSS. Cf. the Exposition of Book II (p. 63, above).

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... of all the other objects that pass to these faculties.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits the rest of this paragraph.

set down the apprehensions proper to each faculty,<sup>1</sup> and first, those of the memory, making here such distinction between them as suffices for our purpose. This we shall be able to deduce from the distinction between their objects, which are three: natural,<sup>2</sup> imaginary and spiritual; according to which there are likewise three kinds of knowledge which come from the memory, namely: natural and supernatural,<sup>3</sup> imaginary and spiritual.

3. All these, by the Divine favour, we shall treat here in due course, beginning with natural knowledge, which pertains to the most exterior objects. And we shall then treat of the affections of the will, wherewith we shall conclude this third book of the active spiritual night.

## CHAPTER II

*Which treats of the natural apprehensions of the memory and describes how the soul must be voided of them in order to be able to attain to union with God according to this faculty.*

IT is necessary that, in each of these books, the reader should bear in mind the purpose of which we are speaking. For otherwise there may arise within him many such questions with respect to what he is reading as might by this time be occurring to him with respect to what we have said of the understanding, and shall say now of the memory, and afterwards shall say of the will. For, seeing how we annihilate the faculties with respect to their operations, it may perhaps seem to him that we are destroying the road of spiritual practice rather than constructing it.

2. This would be true if we were seeking here only to instruct beginners, who are best prepared through these apprehensible and discursive apprehensions. But, since we are here giving instruction to those who would progress farther in contemplation, even to union with God, to which end all these means and exercises of sense concerning the faculties must recede into the background, and be put to silence, to the end that God may of His own accord work Divine

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'we shall here have to treat of the acts of each faculty.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Natural and supernatural,' says the edition of 1630, basing its reading upon the similar one two lines below.

<sup>3</sup> It will be seen from what follows that in practice the Saint preserves the strictly tripartite division given in the text above, supernatural knowledge being found in each of the sections.

union in the soul, it is necessary to proceed by this method of disencumbering and emptying the soul, and causing it to reject the natural jurisdiction and operations of the faculties, so that they may become capable of infusion and illumination from supernatural sources; for their capacity cannot attain to so lofty an experience, but will rather hinder it, if it be not disregarded.

3. And thus, if it be true, as it is, that the soul must proceed in its growing knowledge of God by learning that which He is not rather than that which He is, in order to come to Him, it must proceed by renouncing and rejecting, to the very uttermost, everything in its apprehensions that it is possible to renounce, whether this be natural or supernatural. We shall proceed with this end in view with regard to the memory, drawing it out from its natural state and limitations, and causing it to rise above itself—that is, above all distinct knowledge and apprehensible possession—to the supreme hope of God, Who is incomprehensible.

4. Beginning, then, with natural knowledge, I say that natural knowledge in the memory consists of all the kinds of knowledge that the memory can form concerning the objects of the five bodily senses—namely: hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch—and all kinds of knowledge of this type which it is possible to form and fashion. Of all these forms and kinds of knowledge the soul must strip and void itself, and it must strive to lose the imaginary apprehension of them, so that there may be left in it no kind of impression of knowledge, nor trace of aught soever, but rather the soul must remain barren and bare,<sup>1</sup> as if these forms had never passed through it, and in total oblivion and suspension. And this cannot happen unless the memory be annihilated as to all its forms, if it is to be united with God. For it cannot happen save by total separation from all forms which are not God; for God comes beneath no definite form or kind of knowledge whatsoever, as we have said in treating of the night of the understanding. And since, as Christ says,<sup>2</sup> no man can serve two masters,<sup>3</sup> the memory cannot be united<sup>4</sup> both with God and with forms and distinct kinds of knowledge; and, as God has no form or image that can be comprehended by the memory, it follows that, when the memory is united with God (as is seen, too, every day by experience), it remains without form and

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: '... impression of knowledge, but [the soul] must remain as completely detached as it can.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'as our Redeemer teaches.'

<sup>3</sup> [St. Matthew vi, 24.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'united in perfection.'

without figure, its imagination being lost and itself being absorbed in a supreme good, and in a great oblivion, remembering nothing. For that Divine union voids its fancy and sweeps it<sup>1</sup> clean of all forms and kinds of knowledge and raises it to the supernatural.

5. Now there sometimes comes to pass here a notable thing; for occasionally, when God brings about these touches of union in the memory, the brain (where memory has its seat) is so perceptibly upset that it seems as if it becomes quite inert, and its judgment and sense are lost. This is sometimes more perceptible and sometimes less so, according to the strength of this touch, and then, by reason of this union, the memory is voided and purged, as I say, of all kinds of knowledge. It remains in oblivion—at times in complete oblivion<sup>2</sup>—so that it has to put forth a great effort and to labour greatly in order to remember anything.

6. And sometimes this oblivion of the memory and suspension of the imagination reach such a point, because of the union of the memory with God, that a long time passes without the soul's perceiving it, or knowing what has taken place during that period. And, as the imaginative faculty is then in suspension, it feels naught that is done to it, not even things that cause pain; for without imagination there is no feeling, not even coming through thought, since this exists not.<sup>3</sup> And, to the end that God may bring about these touches of union, the soul must needs withdraw its memory from all apprehensible kinds of knowledge. And it is to be noted that these suspensions come not to pass in those that are already perfect, since they have attained to perfect union, and these suspensions belong to the beginnings of union.

7. Someone will remark that all this seems very well, but that it leads to the destruction of the natural use and course of the faculties, and reduces man to the state of a beast—a state of oblivion and even worse—since he becomes incapable of reasoning or of remembering his natural functions and necessities. It will be argued that God destroys not nature, but rather perfects it; and that from this teaching there necessarily follows its destruction, when that which pertains to morality and reason is not practised and is forgotten, neither is that which is natural practised; for (it will be said) none of these things

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'and seems to sweep it.'

<sup>2</sup> So Alc., P. A: 'It remains in oblivion, and, at times, [is] oblivious to itself.' B: 'It remains transported, and, at times, [is] oblivious to itself.' E.p. omits the whole of the paragraph down to this point, continuing the preceding paragraph, thus: '... raises it to the supernatural, leaving it in such oblivion that it has to put forth ...'

<sup>3</sup> Alc. ends the sentence at 'feeling.'

can be remembered, as the soul is deprived of<sup>1</sup> forms and kinds of knowledge which are the means of remembrance.

8. To this I reply that, the more nearly the memory attains to union with God, the more do distinct kinds of knowledge become perfected within it, until it loses them entirely—namely, when it attains to the state of union in perfection. And thus, at the beginning, when this is first taking place, the soul cannot but fall into great oblivion with respect to all things, since forms and kinds of knowledge are being erased from it; and therefore it is very negligent concerning its outward behaviour and usage—forgetting to eat or drink, and being uncertain if it has done this or no, if it has seen this or no, if it has said this or no—because of the absorption of the memory in God.<sup>2</sup> But when once it attains to the habit of union, which is a supreme blessing, it no longer has these periods of oblivion, after this manner, in that which pertains to natural and moral reason; actions which are seemly and necessary, indeed, it performs with a much greater degree of perfection,<sup>3</sup> although it performs them no longer by means of forms and manners of knowledge pertaining to the memory. For, when it has the habit of union, which is a supernatural state, memory and the other faculties fail it completely in their natural functions, and pass beyond their natural limitations, even to God, Who is supernatural. And thus, when the memory is transformed in God, it cannot receive impressions of forms or kinds of knowledge. Wherefore the functions of the memory and of the other faculties in this state are all Divine; for, when at last God possesses the faculties and has become the entire master of them, through their transformation into Himself, it is He Himself Who moves and commands them divinely, according to His Divine Spirit and will;<sup>4</sup> and the result of this is that the operations of the soul are not distinct, but all that it does is of God, and its operations are Divine, so that, even as Saint Paul says, he that is joined unto God becomes one spirit with Him.<sup>5</sup>

9. Hence it comes to pass that the operations of the soul in union are of the Divine Spirit and are Divine. And hence it comes that the actions of such souls are only those that are seemly and reasonable, and not those that are ill-beseeming. For the Spirit of God teaches them

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'as the soul pays no heed to.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: '... union with God, the less it heeds distinct kinds of knowledge, and this increases in proportion as it draws nearer to the state of union through the absorption of the memory in God.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits the rest of this sentence and the whole of the next.

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits the rest of this paragraph and the first sentence of the next.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians vi, 17.

that which they ought to know, and causes them to be ignorant of that which it behoves them not to know, and to remember that which they have to remember, with or without forms, and to forget that which they should forget; and it makes them love that which they have to love, and not to love that which is not in God. And thus,<sup>1</sup> all the first motions of the faculties of such souls are Divine and it is not to be wondered at that the motions and operations of these faculties should be Divine, since they are transformed in the Divine Being.<sup>2</sup>

10.<sup>3</sup> Of these operations I will give a few examples. Let this be one. A person asks another who is in this state to commend him to God. This person will not remember to do so by means of any form or kind of knowledge that remains in his memory concerning that other person; if it be right that he should recommend him to God (which will be if God desires to receive a prayer for that person), He will move his will and give him a desire to pray for him; and if God desires not such prayer, that other person will not be able nor will desire to pray,<sup>4</sup> though he make great efforts to do so; and at times God will cause him to pray for others of whom he has no knowledge nor has ever heard. And this is because, as I have said, God alone moves the faculties of these souls to do those works which are meet, according to the will and ordinance of God, and they cannot be moved to do others; and thus the works and prayers of these souls are always effectual. Such were those of the most glorious Virgin Our Lady, who, being raised to this high estate from the beginning, had never the form of any creature<sup>5</sup> imprinted in her soul, neither was moved by such, but was invariably guided by the Holy Spirit.

11. Another example. At a certain time a person in this state has to attend to some necessary business. He will remember it by no kind of form, but, without his knowing how, it will come to his soul,<sup>6</sup> at the time and in the manner that it ought to come, and that without fail.

12. And not only in these things does the Holy Spirit give such

<sup>1</sup> E.p. substitutes for this sentence: 'For He [i.e., the Spirit of God] specially governs and moves them so that they may perform those actions which are seemly, according to the will and ordinance of God.'

<sup>2</sup> P. José de Jesús María, in his *Vida y excelencias de la Santísima Virgen María* (I, xl), quotes this and part of the last paragraph from what he claims to be an original MS. of St. John of the Cross, but his text varies considerably from that of any MS. now known. [P. Silverio considers that this and other similar citations are quite untrustworthy.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits paragraphs 10, 11, 12, all of which, however, are restored in the edition of 1630.

<sup>4</sup> Edition of 1630: 'will not pray nor will desire to pray.'

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 'of any creature that would turn her aside from God.'

<sup>6</sup> Edition of 1630 adds here: 'by the stirring up of his memory described above.'

persons light, but also in many others, relating both to the present and to the future, and even, in many cases, as regards those absent from them; and although at times this comes to pass through intellectual forms, it frequently happens without the intervention of any forms that can be apprehended, so that these persons know not how they know.<sup>1</sup> But this comes to them from the Divine Wisdom; for, since these souls exercise themselves in knowing and apprehending nothing with the faculties,<sup>2</sup> they come in general, as we have said in the Mount,<sup>3</sup> to know everything, according to that which the Wise Man says: 'The worker of all things, who is Wisdom, taught me all things.'<sup>4</sup>

13. You will say, perhaps, that the soul will be unable to void and deprive its memory of all forms and fancies to such an extent as to be able to attain to so lofty a state; for there are two things so difficult that their accomplishment surpasses human ability and strength, namely, to throw off with one's natural powers that which is natural, which is hard enough,<sup>5</sup> and to attain and be united to the supernatural, which is much more difficult—indeed, to speak the truth, is impossible with natural ability alone. The truth, I repeat, is that God must place the soul in this supernatural state; but the soul, as far as in it lies, must be continually preparing itself; and this it can do by natural means, especially<sup>6</sup> with the help that God is continually giving it. And thus, as the soul, for its own part, enters into this renunciation and self-emptying of forms, so God begins to give it the possession of union; and this God works passively in the soul, as we shall say, *Deo dante*, when we treat of the passive night of the soul. And thus, when it shall please God, and according to the manner of the soul's preparation, He will grant it the habit of perfect and Divine union.<sup>7</sup>

14. And the Divine effects which God produces in the soul when He has granted it this habit, both as to the understanding and as to the memory and will, we shall not describe in this account of the soul's active purgation and night, for this alone will not bring the soul to Divine union. We shall speak of these effects, however, in treating of the passive night, by means of which is brought about the union of the

<sup>1</sup> Edition of 1630 abbreviates: '... as regards those absent from them, so that these persons know not how they know.'

<sup>2</sup> Edition of 1630: 'and apprehending with the faculties nothing that can impede them.'

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the drawing of the Mount of Perfection. Cf. p. xxxii, above.

<sup>4</sup> Wisdom vii, 21.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'which cannot be' (*que no puede ser*)], but this is a well-known Spanish hyperbole describing what is extremely difficult.]

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits 'especially.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits: 'and Divine.'

soul with God.<sup>1</sup> And so I shall speak here only of the necessary means whereby the memory may place itself actively in this night and purgation, as far as lies in its power. And these means are that the spiritual man must habitually exercise caution, after this manner. All the things that he hears, sees, smells, tastes or touches, he must be careful not to store up or collect in his memory, but he must allow himself to forget them immediately, and this he must accomplish, if need be, with the same efficacy as that with which others contrive to remember them, so that there remains in his memory no knowledge or image of them whatsoever. It must be with him as if they existed not in the world, and his memory must be left free and disencumbered of them, and be tied to no consideration, whether from above or from below, as if he had no faculty of memory; he must freely allow everything to fall into oblivion as though all things were a hindrance to him; and in fact everything that is natural, if one attempt to make use of it in supernatural matters, is a hindrance rather than a help.

15. And if those questions and objections which arose above with respect to the understanding should also arise here (the objections, that is to say, that the soul is doing nothing, is wasting its time and is depriving itself of spiritual blessings which it might well receive through the memory), the answer to this has already been given,<sup>2</sup> and will be given again farther on, in our treatment of the passive night;

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits all the rest of this paragraph, substituting the following passage, which it introduces in order [says P. Silverio] to describe the scope of the Saint's teaching, and which is copied in the edition of 1630:

In [treating of] this purgation of the memory, I speak here only of the necessary means whereby the memory may place itself actively in this night and purgation, as far as lies in its power. And these means are that the spiritual man must habitually exercise caution, after this manner. Of all the things that he sees, hears, smells, tastes or touches he must make no particular store in the memory, or pay heed to them, or dwell upon them, but must allow them to pass and must remain in holy oblivion without reflecting upon them, save when necessary for some good reflection or meditation. And this care to forget and forsake knowledge and images is never applicable to Christ and His Humanity. For, although occasionally, at the height of contemplation and simple regard of the Divinity, the soul may not remember this most sacred Humanity, because God, with His own hand, has raised the soul to this, as it were, confused and most supernatural knowledge, yet it is in no wise seemly to study to forget it, since looking and meditating lovingly upon it will aid the soul to [attain] all that is good, and it is by its means that the soul will most readily rise to the most lofty state of union. And it is clear that, although other bodily and visible things are a hindrance and ought to be forgotten, we must not include among these Him Who became man for our salvation, and Who is the truth, the door, the way and the guide to all good things. This being assumed, let the soul strive after complete abstraction and oblivion, so that, in so far as is possible, there may remain in its memory no more knowledge or image of created things than though they existed not in the world; and let it leave the memory free and disencumbered for God, and, as it were, lost in holy oblivion.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... through the memory) much has already been said here in reply to them, and there, too, they have been completely answered.'

wherefore there is no need for us to dwell upon it here. It is needful only to observe that, although at certain times the benefit of this suspension of forms and of all knowledge may not be realized, the spiritual man must not for that reason grow weary, for in His own time God will not fail to succour him. To attain so great a blessing it behoves the soul to endure much and to suffer with patience and hope.

16. And, although it is true that hardly any soul will be found that is moved by God in all things and at all times, and has such continual union with God that, without the mediation of any form, its faculties<sup>1</sup> are ever moved divinely, there are nevertheless souls who in their operations are very habitually moved by God, and these are not they that are moved of themselves, for, as Saint Paul says, the sons of God, who are transformed and united in God, are moved by the Spirit of God,<sup>2</sup> that is, are moved to perform Divine work in their faculties. And it is no marvel that their operations should be Divine, since the union of the soul is Divine.

### CHAPTER III

*Wherein are described three kinds of evil which come to the soul when it enters not into darkness with respect to knowledge and reflections in the memory. Herein is described the first.*

TO three kinds of evil and inconvenience the spiritual man is subject when he persists in desiring to make use of all natural knowledge and reflections of the memory in order to journey toward God, or for any other purpose: two of these are positive and one is privative. The first comes from things of the world; the second, from the devil; the third, which is privative, is the impediment and hindrance to Divine union caused and effected in the soul.

2. The first evil, which comes from the world,<sup>3</sup> consists in the subjection of the soul, through knowledge<sup>4</sup> and reflection, to many kinds of harm, such as falsehoods, imperfections, desires, opinions, loss of time, and many other things which breed many kinds of impurity in the soul. And it is clear that the soul must of necessity fall into many perils of falsehood, when it admits knowledge and reasoning; for oftentimes that which is true must appear false, and that which is

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'without the mediation of any form.'

<sup>2</sup> Romans viii, 14.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'from the things of the world.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'through much knowledge.'

certain, doubtful; and contrariwise; for there is scarcely a single truth of which we can have complete knowledge. From all these things the soul is free if the memory enters into darkness with respect to every kind of reflection and knowledge.

3. Imperfections meet the soul at every step if it sets its memory upon that which it has heard, seen, touched, smelt and tasted; for there must then perforce cling to it some affection, whether this be of pain, of fear, of hatred, of vain hope, vain enjoyment, vainglory, etc.; for all these are, at the least, imperfections, and at times are downright<sup>1</sup> venial sins; and they leave much impurity most subtly in the soul, even though the reflections and the knowledge have relation to God.<sup>2</sup> And it is also clear that they engender desires within the soul, for these arise naturally from the knowledge and reflections aforementioned, and if one wishes only to have this knowledge and these reflections, even that is a desire. And it is clearly seen that many occasions of judging others will come likewise; for, in using its memory, the soul cannot fail to come upon that which is good and bad in others, and, in such a case, that which is evil oftentimes seems good, and that which is good, evil. I believe there is none who can completely free himself from all these kinds of evil, save by blinding his memory and leading it into darkness with regard to all these things.

4. And if you tell me that a man is well able to conquer all these things when they come to him, I reply that, if he sets store by knowledge, this is simply and utterly impossible; for countless imperfections and follies insinuate themselves into such knowledge, some of which are so subtle and minute that, without the soul's realization thereof, they cling to it of their own accord, even as pitch clings to the man that touches it; so that it is better to conquer once for all by denying the memory completely. You will say likewise that by so doing the soul deprives itself of many good thoughts and meditations upon God, which are of great profit to it and whereby God grants it favours. I reply that to this end purity of soul is of the greatest profit,<sup>3</sup> which means that there clings to the soul no creature affection, or temporal

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'good.'] E.p. reads 'known' for 'downright.'

<sup>2</sup> So Alc., A, B. E.p. reads: '... venial sins: all of these [being] things which disturb perfect purity and most simple union with God.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. inserts, after 'grants it favours': 'I reply that it is not that which is purely God and which aids this simple, pure, universal and confused knowledge that is to be rejected, but that which detains [the memory] in images, forms, figures or similitudes of created things.' It continues: 'And, speaking of this purgation, in order that God may accomplish it, purity of soul is of the greatest profit. . . .' The insertion is also found in the edition of 1630.

affection, or effective advertence; which I believe cannot but cling to the soul because of the imperfection which the faculties have in their own operations. Wherefore it is best to learn to silence the faculties and to cause them to be still, so that God may speak. For, as we have said, in order to attain to this state the natural operations must be completely disregarded, and this happens, as the Prophet says, when the soul comes into solitude, according to these its faculties, and God speaks to its heart.<sup>1</sup>

5. And if you again reply, saying that the soul will have no blessing unless it meditates upon God and allows its memory to reflect upon Him, and that many distractions and negligences will continually enter it, I say that it is impossible, if the memory be recollected with regard both to things of the next life and to things here below, that evils or distractions should enter it, nor any other follies or vices (the which things always enter when the memory wanders), since there is no exit or entrance for them. This would come to pass if, when we had shut the door upon considerations and reflections concerning things above, we opened it to things below; but in this state we shut the door to all things whence distraction may come,<sup>2</sup> causing the memory to be still and dumb, and the ear of the spirit to be attentive, in silence, to God alone, saying with the Prophet: 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.'<sup>3</sup> It was thus that the Spouse in the Songs said that his Bride should be, in these words: 'My sister is a garden enclosed and a fountain sealed up'<sup>4</sup>—that is to say, enclosed and sealed up against all things that may enter.

6. Let the soul, then, remain 'enclosed,' without anxieties and troubles, and He that entered in bodily form to His disciples when the doors were shut, and gave them peace,<sup>5</sup> though they neither knew nor thought that this was possible nor knew how it was possible,<sup>6</sup> will enter spiritually into the soul, without its knowing how He does so, when the doors of its faculties—memory, understanding and will—are enclosed against all apprehensions. And He will fill them with peace, coming down upon the soul, as the prophet says, like a river of peace,<sup>7</sup> and taking from it all the misgivings and suspicions, disturbances and darknesses which caused it to fear that it was lost or was on the way to being so. Let it not grow careless about prayer, and let it wait in detachment and emptiness, for its blessing will not tarry.

<sup>1</sup> Osee ii, 14.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'whence that may come.'] E.p.: 'We shut the door to all things which are a hindrance to union, and whence distraction may come.'

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] iii, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Canticles iv, 12.

<sup>5</sup> [St. John xx, 19].

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'nor knew how it was possible.'

<sup>7</sup> Isaias. xlviii, 18.

CHAPTER IV<sup>1</sup>

*Which treats of the second kind of evil that may come to the soul from the devil by way of the natural apprehensions of the memory.*

THE second positive evil that may come to the soul by means of the knowledge of the memory proceeds from the devil, who by this means obtains great influence over it. For he can continually bring it new forms, kinds of knowledge and reflections, by means whereof he can taint the soul with pride, avarice, wrath, envy, etc., and cause it unjust hatred, or vain love, and deceive it in many ways. And besides this, he is wont to leave impressions,<sup>2</sup> and to implant them in the fancy, in such wise that those that are false appear true, and those that are true, false. And finally all the worst deceptions which are caused by the devil, and the evils that he brings to the soul, enter by way of knowledge and reflections of the memory. Thus if the memory enter into darkness with respect to them all, and be annihilated in its oblivion to them, it shuts the door altogether upon this evil which proceeds from the devil, and frees itself from all these things, which is a great blessing. For the devil has no power over the soul unless it be through the operations of its faculties, principally by means of knowledge,<sup>3</sup> whereupon depend almost all the other operations of the other faculties. Wherefore, if the memory be annihilated with respect to them, the devil can do naught; for he finds no foothold, and without a foothold he is powerless.<sup>4</sup>

2. I would that spiritual persons might clearly see how many kinds of harm are wrought by evil spirits in their souls by means of the memory, when they devote themselves frequently to making use of it, and how many kinds of sadness and affliction and vain and evil<sup>5</sup> joys they have, both with respect to their thoughts about God, and also with respect to the things of the world; and how many impurities are left rooted in their spirits;<sup>6</sup> and likewise how greatly they are distracted from the highest recollection, which consists in the fixing of the whole soul, according to its faculties, upon the one incomprehensible Good, and in withdrawing it from all things that can be appre-

<sup>1</sup> P. omits this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to leave things.'] A, B, e.p.: 'to fix things.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'by means of forms and species.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'he finds nothing to seize upon, and with nothing he can do nothing.']

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and evil.'

<sup>6</sup> Alc. omits: 'and how many . . . spirits.'

hended, since these are not incomprehensible Good.<sup>1</sup> This is a great good (although less good results from this emptiness than from the soul's fixing itself upon God), simply because it is the cause whereby the soul frees itself from many griefs and afflictions and sorrows, over and above the imperfections and sins from which it is freed.

## CHAPTER V

*Of the third evil which comes to the soul by way of the distinct natural knowledge of the memory.*

THE third evil which comes to the soul through the natural apprehensions of the memory is privative; for these apprehensions can hinder moral good and deprive us of spiritual good. And, in order that we may first of all explain how these apprehensions hinder moral good in the soul, it must be known that moral good consists in the restraining of the passions and the curbing of disorderly desires, from which restraint there come to the soul tranquillity, peace and rest, and moral virtues, all of which things are moral good. This restraining and curbing of the passions cannot be truly accomplished by the soul that forgets not and withdraws not itself from things pertaining to itself, whence arise the affections; and no disturbances ever arise in the soul save through the apprehensions of the memory. For, when all things are forgotten, there is naught that can disturb peace or that moves the desires; since, as they say, that which the eye sees not the heart desires not.

2. This we are constantly learning by experience; for we observe that, whenever the soul begins to think of any matter, it is moved and disturbed, either much or little, with respect to that thing, according to the nature of its apprehension. If it be a troublesome and grievous matter, the soul finds sadness<sup>2</sup> in it; if pleasant, desire and joy,<sup>3</sup> and so forth. Wherefore the result of the changing of that apprehension is necessarily disturbance; and thus the soul is now joyful, now sad; now it hates, now loves; and it cannot continue in one and the same attitude (which is an effect of moral tranquillity) save when it strives to forget all things. It is clear, then, that knowledge greatly hinders the good of the moral virtues in the soul.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'since . . . Good.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'sadness or hate.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'if pleasant, joy and desire.'

3. Again, what has been said clearly proves that an encumbered memory also hinders spiritual good;<sup>1</sup> for the soul that is disturbed, and has no foundation of moral good, is to that extent incapable of spiritual good, which impresses itself only upon souls that are restrained and at peace. And besides this, if the soul pays attention and heed to the apprehensions of the memory—seeing that it can attend to but one thing at a time—and busies itself with things that can be apprehended, such as the knowledge of the memory, it is not possible for it to be free to attend to the incomprehensible, which is God. For, in order to approach God, the soul must proceed by not comprehending rather than by comprehending; it must exchange the mutable and comprehensible for the immutable and incomprehensible.

## CHAPTER VI

*Of the benefits which come to the soul from forgetfulness and emptiness of all thoughts and knowledge which it may have in a natural way with respect to the memory.*

FROM the evils which, as we have said, come to the soul through the apprehensions of the memory, we can likewise infer the benefits which are contrary to them and come to the soul as a result of its forgetting them and emptying itself of them. For, as natural philosophy puts it, the same doctrine which serves for one thing serves likewise for its contrary. In the first place, the soul enjoys tranquillity and peace of mind, since it is freed from the disturbance and the changeableness which arise from thoughts and ideas of the memory, and consequently, which is more important, it enjoys purity of conscience and soul. And herein the soul has ample preparation for the acquiring of Divine and human wisdom, and of the virtues.

2. In the second place, it is freed from many suggestions, temptations and motions of the devil, which he infuses into the soul by means of thoughts and ideas, causing it to fall into many impurities and sins,<sup>2</sup> as David says in these words: 'They have thought and spoken wickedness.'<sup>3</sup> And thus, when these thoughts have been completely removed, the devil has naught wherewith to assault the soul by natural means.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The edition of 1630 reads: 'spiritual or mystical good.'

<sup>2</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'to fall, at the least, into many impurities, and, as we have said, into sins.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxxii, 8 [A.V., lxxiii, 8]. E.p.: 'and found wickedness.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'by natural means.'

3. In the third place, the soul has within itself, through this recollection of itself and this forgetfulness as to all things, a preparedness to be moved by the Holy Spirit and taught by Him, for, as the Wise Man says, He removes Himself from thoughts that are without understanding.<sup>1</sup> Even if a man received no other benefit from this forgetfulness and emptiness of the memory than being freed thereby from troubles and disturbances, it would be great gain and good for him. For the troubles and storms which adverse things and happenings arouse in the soul are of no use or help<sup>2</sup> for bringing peace and calm;<sup>3</sup> indeed, as a rule, they make things worse and also harm the soul itself. Wherefore David said: 'Of a truth every man is disquieted in vain.'<sup>4</sup> For it is clear that to disquiet oneself is always vain since it brings profit to none. And thus, even if everything came to an end and were destroyed, and if all things went wrong and turned to adversity, it would be vain to disturb oneself; for such disturbance hurts a man rather than relieves him. Whereas to bear everything with equable and peaceful tranquillity not only brings the soul the profit of many blessings, but likewise causes it, even in the midst of its adversities, to form a truer judgment about them and to find them a fitting remedy.

4. For this reason Solomon, being well acquainted both with the evil and with the benefit of which we are speaking, said: 'I knew that there was naught better for man than to rejoice and to do good in his life.'<sup>5</sup> By this he meant that, in everything that happens to us, howsoever adverse it be, we should rejoice rather than be disturbed, so that we may not lose a blessing which is greater than any kind of prosperity—namely, tranquillity and peace of mind in all things, which, whether they bring adversity or prosperity, we must bear in the same manner. This a man would never lose if he were not only to forget all kinds of knowledge and put aside all thoughts, but would even withdraw himself from hearing, sight and commerce with others, in so far as was possible for him. Our nature is so frail and unstable that, however well it be disciplined, it will hardly fail to stumble upon the remembrance of things which will disturb and change a mind that was in peace and tranquillity when it remembered them not. For this cause said Jeremias: 'With memory I will remember, and my soul will fail me for pain.'<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom i, 5.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'or help.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'for the peace and calm of the same things and happenings.'] E.p. omits: 'things and.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xxxviii, 7 [A.V., xxxix, 6].

<sup>5</sup> Ecclesiastes iii, 12.

<sup>6</sup> Lamentations iii, 20.

## CHAPTER VII

*Which treats of the second kind of apprehension of the memory—namely, imaginary apprehensions—and of supernatural knowledge.*

ALTHOUGH in writing of natural apprehensions of the first kind we also gave instruction concerning the imaginary, which are likewise natural, it was well to make this division because of the love which the memory always has for other forms and kinds of knowledge, which are of supernatural things, such as visions, revelations, locutions and feelings which come in a supernatural way. When these things have passed through the soul, there is wont to remain impressed upon it some image, form, figure or idea, whether in the soul or in the memory or fancy, at times very vividly and effectively. Concerning these images it is also needful to give advice, lest the memory be encumbered with them and they be a hindrance to its union with God in perfect and pure hope.

2. I say that the soul, in order to attain that blessing, must never reflect upon the clear and distinct objects which may have passed through its mind by supernatural means, in such a way as to preserve within itself the forms and figures and knowledge of those things. For we must ever bear in mind this principle: the greater heed the soul gives to any clear and distinct apprehensions, whether natural or supernatural, the less capacity and preparation it has for entering into the abyss of faith, wherein are absorbed all things else. For, as has been said, no supernatural forms or kinds of knowledge which can be apprehended by the memory are God,<sup>1</sup> and, in order to reach God, the soul must void itself of all that is not God. The memory must also strip itself of all these forms and kinds of knowledge, that it may unite itself with God in hope.<sup>2</sup> For all possession is contrary to hope, which, as Saint Paul says, belongs to that which is not possessed.<sup>3</sup> Wherefore, the more the memory dispossesses itself, the greater is its hope; and the more it has of hope, the more it has of union with God; for, with respect to God, the more the soul hopes, the more it attains. And it hopes most when it is most completely dispossessed; and, when it shall be perfectly dispossessed, it will remain with the perfect possession of

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'nor do they bear any proportion to Him nor can serve as proximate means to union with Him.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... unite itself with God in a manner of mystical and perfect hope.'

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews xi, r.

God,<sup>1</sup> in Divine union. But there are many who will not deprive themselves of the sweetness and delight which memory finds in those forms and notions, wherefore they attain not to supreme possession and perfect sweetness. For he that renounces not all that he possesses cannot be the disciple of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER VIII

*Of the evils which may be caused in the soul by the knowledge of supernatural things, if it reflect upon them. Says how many these evils are.*<sup>3</sup>

THE spiritual man incurs the risk of five kinds of evil if he pays heed to, and reflects upon, these forms and ideas which are impressed upon him by the things which pass through his mind in a supernatural way.

2. The first is that he is frequently deceived, and mistakes one thing for another. The second is that he is like to fall, and is exposed to the danger of falling, into some form of presumption or vanity. The third is that the devil has many occasions of deceiving him by means of the apprehensions aforementioned. The fourth is that he is hindered as to union in hope with God. The fifth is that, for the most part, he has a low judgment of God.

3. As to the first evil, it is clear that, if the spiritual man pays heed to these forms and notions, and reflects upon them, he must frequently be deceived in his judgment of them; for, as no man can have a complete understanding of the things that pass through his imagination naturally, nor a perfect and certain judgment about them, he will be much less able still to have this with respect to supernatural things, which are above our capacity to understand, and occur but rarely. Wherefore he will often think that what comes but from his fancy pertains to God; and often, too, that what is of God is of the devil, and what is of the devil is of God. And very often there will remain with him deep-seated impressions of forms and ideas concerning the good and evil of others, or of himself, together with other figures which have been presented to him: these he will consider to be most certain and true, when in fact they will not be so, but very great falsehoods.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'in so far as may be in this life.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xiv, 33.

<sup>3</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'and treats here of the first.'

And others will be true, and he will judge them to be false, although this error I consider safer, as it is apt to arise from humility.

4. And, even if he be not deceived as to their truth, he may well be deceived as to their quantity or quality,<sup>1</sup> thinking that little things are great, and great things, little. And with respect to their quality, he may consider what is in his imagination to be this or that, when it is something quite different; he may put, as Isaias says, darkness for light, and light for darkness, and bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.<sup>2</sup> And finally, even though he be correct as to one thing, it will be a marvel if he goes not astray with respect to the next; for, although he may not desire to apply his judgment to the judging of them, yet, if he apply it in paying heed to them, this will be sufficient to make some evil to cling to him as a result of it,<sup>3</sup> at least passively; if not evil of this kind, then of one of the four other kinds of which we shall shortly speak.

5. It behoves the spiritual man, therefore, lest he fall into this evil of being deceived in his judgment, not to desire to apply his judgment in order to know the nature of his own condition or feelings, or the nature of such and such a vision, idea or feeling; neither should he desire to know it or to pay heed<sup>4</sup> to it. This he should only desire in order to speak of it to his spiritual father, and to be taught by him how to void his memory of these apprehensions.<sup>5</sup> For, whatever may be their intrinsic nature, they cannot help him to love God as much as the smallest act of living faith and hope performed in the emptiness and renunciation of all things.<sup>6</sup>

## CHAPTER IX

*Of the second kind of evil, which is the peril of falling into self-esteem and vain presumption.*

THE supernatural apprehensions of the memory already described are also a frequent occasion to spiritual persons of falling into some kind of presumption or vanity, if they give heed to them and set store by them. For, even as he who knows nothing of them is

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'quality and value.'

<sup>2</sup> Isaias v, 20.

<sup>3</sup> The 1630 edition adds: 'and for him to suffer from it.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'pay much heed.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. adds: 'or [to do] what in his particular case may be most expedient, with this same detachment.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'in the emptiness of all this.'

quite free from falling into this vice, since he sees in himself no occasion of presumption, even so, in contrary wise, he that has experience of them has close at hand an occasion for thinking himself to be something, since he possesses these supernatural communications. For, although it is true that he may attribute them to God, hold himself<sup>1</sup> to be unworthy of them, and give God the thanks, yet nevertheless there is wont to remain in his spirit a certain secret satisfaction, and a self-esteem and a sense of their value, from which, without his knowledge, there will come to him great spiritual pride.

2. This may be observed very clearly by such as will consider the dislike and aversion caused them by any who do not praise their spirituality, or esteem the experiences which they enjoy, and the mortification which they suffer when they think or are told that others have just those same experiences, or even superior ones. All this arises from secret self-esteem and pride, and they can never quite realize that they are steeped in pride up to their very eyes. For they think that a certain degree of recognition of their own wretchedness suffices, and, although they have this, they are full of secret self-esteem and self-satisfaction, taking more delight in their own spirituality and spiritual gifts<sup>2</sup> than in those of others. They are like the Pharisee who gave thanks to God that he was not as other men, and that he practised such and such virtues, whereat he was satisfied with himself and presumed thereon.<sup>3</sup> Such men, although they may not use the Pharisee's actual words, habitually resemble him in spirit. And some of them even become so proud that they are worse than the devil. For, observing in themselves, as they imagine, certain apprehensions and feelings concerning God which are devout and sweet, they become self-satisfied to such an extent that they believe themselves to be very near God; and those that are not like themselves they consider very low and despise them after the manner of the Pharisee.<sup>4</sup>

3. In order to flee from this pestilent evil, abhorrent in the eyes of God, they must consider two things. First, that virtue consists not in apprehensions and feelings concerning God, howsoever sublime they be, nor in anything of this kind that a man can feel within himself; but, on the contrary, in that which has nothing to do with feeling—namely, a great humility and contempt of oneself and of all that pertains to oneself, firmly rooted in the soul and keenly felt by it; and likewise in

<sup>1</sup> E.p. : 'feel himself.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. : 'spirituality and gifts.'

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke xviii, 11-12.

<sup>4</sup> A, B : 'and despise them as the Pharisee despised the publican.'

being glad that others feel in this very way concerning oneself and in not wishing to be of any account in the esteem<sup>1</sup> of others.

4. Secondly, it must be noted that all visions, revelations and feelings coming from Heaven, and any thoughts that may proceed from these, are of less worth than the least act of humility. And humility is one of the effects of charity, which esteems not its own things nor strives to attain them; nor thinks evil, save of itself; nor thinks any good thing of itself, but only of others. It is well, therefore, that these supernatural apprehensions should not attract men's eyes, but that they should strive to forget them in order that they may be free.

## CHAPTER X

*Of the third evil that may come to the soul from the devil, through the imaginary apprehensions of the memory.*

FROM all that has been said above it may be clearly understood and inferred how great is the evil that may come to the soul from the devil by way of these supernatural apprehensions. For not only can he represent to the memory and the fancy many false forms and ideas, which seem true and good, impressing them on spirit and sense with great effectiveness and certifying them to be true by means of suggestion (so that it appears to the soul that it cannot be otherwise, but that everything is even as he represents it; for, as he transfigures himself into an angel of light, he appears as light to the soul); but he may also tempt the soul in many ways with respect to true knowledge, which is of God, moving its desires<sup>2</sup> and affections, whether spiritual or sensual, in unruly fashion with respect to these; for, if the soul takes pleasure in such apprehensions, it is very easy for the devil to cause its desires and affections to grow<sup>3</sup> within it, and to make it fall into spiritual gluttony and other evils.

2. And, in order the better to do this, he is wont to suggest and give pleasure, sweetness and delight to the senses with respect to these same things of God, so that the soul is corrupted and bewildered<sup>4</sup> by that sweetness, and is thus blinded with that pleasure and sets its eyes on

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'in the heart.']

<sup>2</sup> A, B: 'its will and desires.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B and many of the editions (not, however, e.p.) have *creer* ('believe') for *crecer* ('grow'), so that we should have to read: 'to cause it to believe its desires and affections.'

<sup>4</sup> [The two verbs, in the original, have very definite and concrete meanings, 'sweetened with honey' and 'dazzled by a lamp' respectively.]

pleasure rather than on love (or, at least, very much more than upon love), and gives more heed to the apprehensions than to the detachment and emptiness which are found in faith and hope and love of God. And from this he may go on gradually to deceive the soul and cause it to believe his falsehoods with great facility. For to the soul that is blind falsehood no longer appears to be falsehood, nor does evil appear to be evil, etc.; for darkness appears to be light, and light, darkness; and hence that soul comes to commit a thousand foolish errors,<sup>1</sup> whether with respect to natural things, or to moral things, or to spiritual things; so that that which was wine to it becomes vinegar. All this happens to the soul because it began not, first of all, by denying itself the pleasure of those supernatural things. At first this is a small matter, and not very harmful, and the soul has therefore no misgivings, and allows it to continue, and it grows,<sup>2</sup> like the grain of mustard seed, into a tall tree. For a small error at the beginning, as they say, becomes a great error in the end.

3. Wherefore, in order to flee from this great evil, which comes<sup>3</sup> from the devil, the soul must not desire to have any pleasure in such things, because such pleasure will most surely lead it to become blind and to fall. For of their own nature, and without the help of the devil,<sup>4</sup> pleasure and delight and sweetness blind<sup>5</sup> the soul. And this was the meaning of David when he said: 'Perhaps darkness shall blind me in my delights and I shall have the night for my light.'<sup>6</sup>

## CHAPTER XI

*Of the fourth evil that comes to the soul from the distinct supernatural apprehensions of the memory, which is the hindrance that it interposes to union.*

CONCERNING this fourth evil there is not much to be said, since it has already been treated again and again in this third book, wherein we have proved how, in order that the soul may come to union with God in hope, it must renounce every possession of the memory; for, in order that its hope in God may be perfect, it must have

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds here: 'so that that which was wine to it becomes vinegar,' omitting this same phrase where it occurs below.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'to continue and grow.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'and without the help of the devil.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'dull and blind.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'which may come.'

<sup>6</sup> Psalm cxxxviii, 11 [A.V., cxxxix, 11].

naught in the memory that is not God. And, as we have likewise said, no form or figure or image or other kind of knowledge that may come to the memory can be God, neither can be like Him, whether it be of heaven or of earth,<sup>1</sup> natural or supernatural, even as David teaches, when he says: 'Lord, among the gods there is none like unto Thee.'<sup>2</sup>

2. Wherefore, if the memory desires to pay heed to any of these things, it hinders the soul from reaching God; first, because it encumbers it, and next because, the more the soul has of possession, the less it has of hope.<sup>3</sup> Wherefore it is needful for the soul to be stripped of the distinct forms and the knowledge of supernatural things, and to become oblivious to them, so that the memory may cause no hindrance to its union with God in perfect hope.

## CHAPTER XII

*Of the fifth evil that may come to the soul in supernatural imaginary forms and apprehensions, which is a low and unseemly judgment of God.*

NO less serious is the fifth evil that comes to the soul from its desire to retain in the memory and imagination the said forms and images of things that are supernaturally communicated to it, above all if it desires to use them as a means to Divine union. For it is a very easy thing to judge of the Being and greatness of God less worthily and nobly than befits His incomprehensible nature; for, although our reason and judgment may form no express conception that God is like any one of these things, yet the very esteeming of these apprehensions, if in fact the soul esteems them, makes and causes it not to esteem God,<sup>4</sup> or not to feel concerning Him, as highly as faith teaches, since faith tells us that He is incomparable, incomprehensible, and so forth. For, quite apart from the fact that the soul takes from God all that it gives to the creature, it is natural that its esteem of these apprehensible things should lead it to make a certain inward comparison between such things and God, which would prevent it from judging and esteeming God as highly as it ought. For the creatures, whether terrestrial or celestial, and all distinct images and kinds of knowledge,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'whether it be of heaven or of earth.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxxxv, 8 [A.V., lxxxvi, 8].

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'of perfection of hope.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'the very esteeming of these apprehensions makes the soul not to esteem God . . .'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'and all the forms and images.'

both natural and supernatural, that can be encompassed by the faculties of the soul, however lofty they be in this life, have no comparison or proportion with the Being of God, since God falls within no genus and no species, whereas the creatures do, or so the theologians tell us.<sup>1</sup> And the soul in this life is not capable of receiving in a clear and distinct manner aught save that which falls within genus and species. For this cause Saint John says that no man hath seen God at any time.<sup>2</sup> And Isaias says it has not entered into the heart of man what God is like.<sup>3</sup> And God said to Moses that he could not see Him while he was in this mortal state.<sup>4</sup> Wherefore he that encumbers his memory and the other faculties of the soul with that which they can comprehend cannot esteem God, neither feel concerning Him, as he ought.

2. Let us make a comparison on a lower level. It is clear that the more a man fixes his eyes<sup>5</sup> upon the servants of a king, and the more notice he takes of them, the less notice does he take of the king himself, and the less does he esteem him; for, although this comparison may not be formally and distinctly present in the understanding, it is inherent in the act, since, the more attention the man gives to the servants, the more he takes from their lord; and he cannot have a very high opinion of the king if the servants appear to him to be of any importance while they are in the presence of the king, their lord. Even so does the soul treat its God when it pays heed to the creatures<sup>6</sup> aforementioned. This comparison, however, is on a very low level, for, as we have said, God is of another being than His creatures in that He is infinitely far from them all. For this reason they must all be banished from sight, and the soul must withdraw its gaze from them in all their forms, that it may set its gaze on God through faith and hope.<sup>7</sup>

3. Wherefore those who not only pay heed to the imaginary apprehensions aforementioned, but suppose God to be like to some of them, and think that by means of them they will be able to attain to union with God, have already gone far astray and will ever continue to lose the light<sup>8</sup> of faith in the understanding, through which this faculty is united with God; neither will they grow in the loftiness of hope, by means whereof the memory is united with God in hope,<sup>9</sup> which must be brought about through disunion from all that is of the imagination.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. ends this sentence at 'no species.'

<sup>3</sup> Isaias lxiv, 4.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'fixes the eyes of his esteem.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'and perfect hope.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p. omits: 'in hope.'

<sup>2</sup> St. John i, 18.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 20.

<sup>6</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'to the things.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'and profit not greatly by the light.'

## CHAPTER XIII

*Of the benefits which the soul receives through banishing from itself the apprehensions of the imagination. This chapter answers a certain objection and explains a difference which exists between apprehensions that are imaginary, natural and supernatural.<sup>1</sup>*

THE benefits that come from voiding the imagination of imaginary forms can be clearly observed in the five evils aforementioned which they inflict upon the soul, if it desires to retain them, even as we also said of the natural forms. But, apart from these, there are other benefits for the spirit—namely, those of great rest and quiet. For, setting aside that natural rest which the soul obtains when it is free from images and forms, it likewise becomes free from anxiety as to whether they are good or evil, and as to how it must behave with respect to the one and to the other. Nor has it to waste the labour and time of its spiritual masters by requiring them to decide if these things are good or evil, and if they are of this kind or of another; for the soul has no need to desire to know all this if it pays no heed to them.<sup>2</sup> The time and energies which it would have wasted in dealing with these images and forms<sup>3</sup> can be better employed in another and a more profitable exercise, which is that of the will with respect to God, and in having a care to seek detachment and poverty of spirit and sense, which consists in desiring earnestly to be without any consoling support that can be apprehended, whether interior or exterior. This we practise well when we desire and strive to strip ourselves of these forms, since from this there will proceed no less a benefit than that of approach to God (Who has no image, neither form nor figure), and this will be the greater according as the soul withdraws itself the more completely from all forms, images and figures of the imagination.<sup>4</sup>

2. But perchance you will say: 'Why do many spiritual persons counsel the soul to strive to profit by the communications and feelings which come from God, and to desire to receive them from Him, that it may have something to give Him; since, if He gives us nothing, we shall give Him nothing likewise? And wherefore does Saint Paul say:

<sup>1</sup> So Alc., e.p. The other authorities have the first sentence of the title only.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'but [needs] only to reject them in the sense already mentioned.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'which would have been wasted upon this.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'of the imagination.'

“Quench not the spirit?”<sup>1</sup> And the Spouse to the Bride: “Set Me as a seal<sup>2</sup> upon thy heart and as a seal upon thine arm?”<sup>3</sup> This certainly denotes some kind of apprehension. And, according to the instruction given above, not only must all this not be striven after, but, even though God sends it, it must be rejected and cast aside. But surely it is clear that, since God gives it, He gives it to a good purpose, and it will have a good effect. We must not throw away pearls. And it is even a kind of pride to be unwilling to receive the things of God, as if we could do without them and were self-sufficient.’

3. In order to meet this objection it is necessary to recall what we said in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters<sup>4</sup> of the second book, where to a great extent the difficulty is solved. For we said there that the good that overflows in the soul from supernatural apprehensions, when they come from a good source, is produced passively in the soul at that very instant<sup>5</sup> when they are represented to the senses, without the working of any operation of the faculties. Wherefore it is unnecessary for the will to perform the act of receiving them; for, as we have also said, if at that time the soul should try to labour with its faculties,<sup>6</sup> the effect of its own base and natural operation would be to hinder the supernatural graces<sup>7</sup> which God is even then working in it rather than that, through these apprehensions, God should cause it to derive any benefit from its active labour. Nay, rather, as the spirituality coming from those imaginary apprehensions is given passively to the soul, even so must the soul conduct itself passively with respect to them, setting no store by its inward or outward actions.<sup>8</sup> To do this is to preserve the feelings that have their source in God, for in this way they are not lost through the soul’s base manner of working. And this is not quenching the spirit; for the spirit would be quenched by the soul if it desired to behave in any other manner than that whereby God is leading it. And this it would be doing if, when God had given it spiritual graces<sup>9</sup> passively, as He does in these apprehensions, it should then desire to exert itself actively with respect to them, by labouring<sup>10</sup> with its understanding<sup>11</sup> or by seeking to find something in

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thessalonians v, 19.

<sup>2</sup> D, P: ‘as a sign.’

<sup>3</sup> Canticles viii, 6.

<sup>4</sup> More correctly, in Chaps. xvi and xvii.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: ‘at that very instant.’

<sup>6</sup> A, B: ‘labour with the favour of its faculties.’ E.p.: ‘labour according to the ability of its faculties.’

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, ‘the supernatural.’]

<sup>8</sup> E.p. adds: ‘in the sense mentioned above.’

<sup>9</sup> [*Lit.*, ‘had given it spirit’ (or ‘spirituality’).]

<sup>10</sup> E.p. inserts: ‘of itself.’

<sup>11</sup> E.p. ends the paragraph here, but the 1630 edition adds ‘beyond what God gives it’ and continues, with the variants noted below.]

them. And this is clear because, if the soul desires to labour at that time with its own exertions, its work cannot be more than natural, for of itself<sup>1</sup> it is capable of no more; for supernaturally<sup>2</sup> it neither moves itself nor can move itself—it is God that moves it and brings it to this state.<sup>3</sup> And thus, if the soul at that time desires to labour with its own exertions (as far as lies in its power), its active working will hinder the passive work<sup>4</sup> that God is communicating to it, which is spirit.<sup>5</sup> It will be setting itself to its own work, which is of another and an inferior kind than that which God communicates to it; for the work of God is passive and supernatural, and that of the soul is active and natural;<sup>6</sup> and in this way the soul would therefore be quenching the spirit.

4. That this activity of the soul is an inferior one is also clear from the fact that the faculties of the soul cannot, of their own power,<sup>7</sup> reflect and act, save upon some form, figure and image, and this is the rind and accident of the substance and spirit which lie beneath this rind and accident. This substance and spirit unite not with the faculties of the soul in true understanding and love, save when at last the operation of the faculties ceases. For the aim and end of this operation is only that the substance which can be understood and loved and which lies beneath these forms may come to be received in the soul. The difference, therefore, between active and passive operation, and the superiority of the latter, corresponds to the difference between that which is being done and that which is done already, or between that which a man tries to attain and effect and that which is already effected. Hence it may likewise be inferred that, if the soul should desire to employ its faculties actively on these supernatural apprehensions, wherein God, as we have said, bestows the spirit of them passively, it would be doing nothing less than abandoning what it had already done, in order to do it again, neither would it enjoy what it had done, nor could it produce any other result, by these actions of its own, save that of impeding what had been done already. For, as we say, the faculties cannot of their own power attain to the spirituality which God bestows upon the soul without any operation of their own. And thus the soul

<sup>1</sup> The 1630 edition adds: 'or, at most, if it be supernatural, it must be very much inferior to that which God would work in it, for of itself.'

<sup>2</sup> The 1630 edition has: 'for in this most sublime and supernatural way.'

<sup>3</sup> The 1630 edition adds: 'when it gives its consent.'

<sup>4</sup> The 1630 edition has: 'it will, with its working, hinder the work.'

<sup>5</sup> [Or 'spirituality.' Cf. p. 235, n. 9, above.]

<sup>6</sup> The 1630 edition omits: 'for the work . . . active and natural.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'cannot, according to their natural and ordinary method.'

would be directly quenching the spirituality<sup>1</sup> which God infuses through these imaginary apprehensions aforementioned if it were to set any store by them; wherefore it must set them aside, and take up a passive and negative attitude with regard to them.<sup>2</sup> For at that time God is moving the soul to things which are above its own power and knowledge. For this cause the Prophet said: 'I will stand upon my watch and set my step upon my tower, and I will watch to see that which will be said to me.'<sup>3</sup> This is as though he were to say: I will stand on guard over my faculties and I will take no step forward as to my actions, and thus I shall be able to contemplate that which will be said to me—that is, I shall understand and enjoy that which will be communicated to me supernaturally.

5. And the passage which has been quoted concerning the Spouse is to be understood as referring to the love that He entreats of<sup>4</sup> the Bride, the office of which love between two lovers is to make one like to the other<sup>5</sup> in the most vital part of them. Wherefore He tells her to set Him as a seal upon her heart,<sup>6</sup> where all the arrows strike that leave the quiver of love, which arrows are the actions and motives of love. So they will all strike Him Who is there as a mark<sup>7</sup> for them; and thus all will be for Him, so that the soul will become like Him through the actions and motions of love, until it be transformed in Him. Likewise he bids her set Him as a seal<sup>8</sup> upon her arm, because the arm performs<sup>9</sup> the exercise of love, for by the arm the Beloved is sustained and comforted.

6. Therefore all that the soul has to endeavour to do with respect to all the apprehensions which come to it from above, whether imaginary or of any other kind—it matters not if they be visions, locutions, feelings or revelations—is to make no account of the letter or the ring (that is, of what is signified or represented or given to be understood), but to pay heed only to the possession of the love of God which they cause interiorly within the soul. And in this case the soul will make account, not of feelings of sweetness or delight, nor of figures, but of the feelings of love which they cause it. And with this sole end in view it may at times recall that image and apprehension caused it by love, in order to set the spirit on its course of love. For, though the effect of that apprehension

<sup>1</sup> [Or 'the spirit.' Cf. p. 235, n. 9, above.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits 'and negative' and adds 'as we say.'

<sup>3</sup> Habacuc ii, 1. [The original has 'munition' for 'tower' and 'contemplate' for 'watch and see.']

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'that He has to.'

<sup>5</sup> Canticles viii, 6. A, B: 'as a sign.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'as a sign.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits the rest of this sentence.

<sup>7</sup> A, e.p.: 'as a sign.'

<sup>9</sup> [Lit., 'because in the arm is.']

be not so great afterwards, when it is recalled, as it was on the first occasion when it was communicated, yet, when it is recalled, love is renewed, and the mind is lifted up to God, especially when the recollection is of certain figures, images or feelings which are supernatural, and are wont to be sealed and imprinted upon the soul in such a way that they continue for a long time—some of them, indeed, never leave the soul. And those that are thus sealed upon the soul produce in it Divine effects of love, sweetness, light and so forth, on almost every occasion when the soul returns to them, sometimes more so and sometimes less; for it was to this end that they were impressed upon it. And thus this is a great favour for the soul on which God bestows it, for it is as though it had within itself a mine of blessings.

7. The figures which produce effects such as these are deeply implanted in the soul,<sup>1</sup> and are not like other images and forms that are retained in the fancy. And thus the soul has no need to have recourse to this faculty when it desires to recall them, for it sees that it has them within itself, and that they are as an image seen in the mirror. When it comes to pass that any soul has such figures formally within itself, it will then do well to recall them to the effect of love to which I have referred, for they will be no hindrance to the union of love in faith, since the soul will not desire to be absorbed in the figure, but only to profit by the love; it will immediately set aside the figure, which thus will rather be a help to it.

8. Only with great difficulty can it be known when these images are imprinted upon the soul, and when upon the fancy.<sup>2</sup> For those which touch the fancy are as apt to occur very frequently as are the others; for certain persons are accustomed habitually to have imaginary visions in their imagination and fancy, which are presented to them in one form with great frequency; sometimes because the apprehensive power of the organ concerned is very great, and, however little they reflect upon it, that habitual figure is at once presented to, and outlined upon, their fancy; sometimes because it is the work of the devil; sometimes, again, because it is the work of God; but the visions are not formally imprinted upon the soul. They may be known, however, by their effects. For those that are natural, or that come from the devil, produce no good effect upon the soul, however frequently they be recalled, nor work its spiritual renewal, but the contemplation of them simply

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'according to its intellectual memory.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... when these images touch the spiritual part of the soul directly and when they belong to the fancy.'

produces aridity. Those that are good, however, produce some good effect when they are recalled, like that<sup>1</sup> which was produced in the soul upon the first occasion. But the formal images which are imprinted upon the soul almost invariably produce some effect in it, whensoever they are remembered.

9. He that has experienced these will readily distinguish the one kind from the other, for the great difference<sup>2</sup> between them is very clear to anyone that has experience of them. I will merely say that those which are formally and durably imprinted upon the soul are of very rare occurrence. But, whether they be of this kind or of that, it is good for the soul to desire to understand nothing, save God alone, through faith, in hope. And if anyone makes the objection that to reject these things, if they are good, appears to be pride, I reply that it is not so, but that it is prudent humility to profit by them in the best way, as has been said, and to be guided by that which is safest.

## CHAPTER XIV

*Which treats of spiritual knowledge in so far as it may concern the memory.*

WE classed spiritual forms of knowledge as the third division of the apprehensions of the memory, not because they belong to the bodily sense of the fancy, as do the others, for they have no bodily form and image,<sup>3</sup> but because they are likewise apprehensible by spiritual memory and reminiscence. Now, after the soul has had experience of one of these apprehensions, it can recall it whensoever it will; and this is not by the effigy<sup>4</sup> and image that the apprehension has left in the bodily sense, for, since this is of bodily form, as we say, it has no capacity for spiritual forms; but because it recalls it, intellectually and spiritually, by means of that form which it has left impressed upon the soul, which is likewise a formal or spiritual form or notion or image, whereby it is recalled, or by means of the effect that it has wrought. It is for this reason that I place these apprehensions among those of the memory, although they belong not to the apprehensions of the fancy.

<sup>1</sup> So e.p. The MSS. [and P. Silverio] read: 'in that.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'the aforementioned difference.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'for they have no bodily form and image.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'not by the figure.'

2. What these kinds of knowledge are, and how the soul is to conduct itself with respect to them in order to attain to union with God, are sufficiently described in the twenty-fourth chapter<sup>1</sup> of the second book, where we treated this knowledge as apprehensions of the understanding. Let this be referred to, for we there described how it was of two kinds: either uncreated<sup>2</sup> or of the creatures. I speak now only of things relating to my present purpose—namely, how the memory must behave with respect to them in order to attain to union. And I say, as I have just said of formal knowledge in the preceding chapter (for this, being of created things, is of the same kind), that these apprehensions may be recalled when they produce good effects, not that they may be dwelt upon, but that they may quicken the soul's love and knowledge of God. But, unless the recollection of them produces good effects, let the memory never give them even passing attention. With regard to uncreated knowledge,<sup>3</sup> I say that the soul should try to recall it as often as possible, for it will produce most beneficial effects. As we said above, it produces touches and impressions of union with God, which is the aim towards which we are directing the soul. And by no form, image or figure which can be impressed upon the soul does the memory recall these (for these touches and impressions of union with the Creator<sup>4</sup> have no form), but only by the effects which they have produced upon it of light, love, joy and spiritual renewal, and so forth, some of which are wrought anew in the soul whensoever they are remembered.

## CHAPTER XV

*Which sets down the general method whereby the spiritual person must govern himself with respect to this sense.*

**I**N order to conclude this discussion on the memory, it will be well at this point to give the spiritual reader an account of<sup>5</sup> the method which he must observe, and which is of universal application, in order that he may be united with God according to this sense.<sup>6</sup> For, although what has been said makes the subject quite clear, it will nevertheless be more easily apprehended if we summarize it here. To this end

<sup>1</sup> Really the chapter is the twenty-sixth.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'either of uncreated perfections.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'With regard to the knowledge of things uncreated.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'with God.'

<sup>5</sup> Only Alc. and e.p. have: 'an account of.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'this faculty.'

it must be remembered that, since our aim is the union of the soul with God in hope, according to the memory, and since that which is hoped for is that which is not possessed, and since, the less we possess of other things, the greater scope and the greater capacity have we for hoping, and consequently the greater hope,<sup>1</sup> therefore, the more things we possess, the less scope and capacity is there for hoping, and consequently the less hope<sup>2</sup> have we. Hence, the more the soul dispossesses the memory of forms and things which may be recalled by it, which are not God,<sup>3</sup> the more will it set its memory upon God, and the emptier will its memory become, so that it may hope for Him Who shall fill it. What must be done, then, that the soul may live in the perfect and pure hope of God is that, whensoever these distinct images, forms and ideas come to it, it must not rest in them, but must turn immediately to God, voiding the memory of them entirely, with loving affection. It must neither think of these things nor consider them beyond the degree which is necessary for the understanding and performing of its obligations, if they have any concern with these. And this it must do without setting any affection or inclination upon them, so that they may produce no effects<sup>4</sup> in the soul. And thus a man must not fail to think and recall that which he ought to know and do, for, provided he preserves no affection or attachments, this will do him no harm. For this matter the lines of the Mount, which are in the thirteenth chapter<sup>5</sup> of the first book, will be of profit.

2. But here it must be borne in mind that this doctrine of ours does not agree, nor do we desire that it should agree, with the doctrine of those pestilent men, who, inspired by Satanic pride and envy, have desired to remove from the eyes of the faithful the holy and necessary use, and the worthy<sup>6</sup> adoration, of images of God and of the saints. This teaching of ours is very different from that; for we say not here, as they do, that images should not exist, and should not be adored; we simply explain the difference between images and God. We exhort men to pass beyond that which is superficial<sup>7</sup> that they may not be hindered

<sup>1</sup> E. p.: 'the greater perfection of hope.'

<sup>2</sup> E. p.: 'the less perfection of hope.'

<sup>3</sup> E. p.: 'which are not Divinity or God made human, the memory of Whom is always a help to that end, since He is the true Way and Guide and Author of all good.' With this addition, cf. that quoted on p. 218, n. 1, above.

<sup>4</sup> E. p.: 'no effects or perturbations.'

<sup>5</sup> So e. p. A, B have: 'in the first chapter,' referring apparently to the drawing described above (p. xxiv). Alc., C, D [followed by P. Silverio] read: 'in the chapter.'

<sup>6</sup> [The Spanish word, *ínelita*, is stronger than this, meaning 'distinguished,' 'illustrious.']

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'which is painted.']

from attaining to the living truth beneath it, and to make no more account of the former than suffices for attainment to the spiritual. For means are good and necessary to an end; and images are means which serve to remind us of God and of the saints. But when we consider and attend to the means more than is necessary for treating them as such, they disturb and hinder us as much, in their own way, as any different thing;<sup>1</sup> the more so, when we treat of supernatural visions and images,<sup>2</sup> to which I am specially referring, and with respect to which arise many deceptions and perils. For, with respect to the remembrance and adoration and esteem of images, which the Catholic Church sets before us,<sup>3</sup> there can be no deception or peril, because naught is esteemed therein other than that which is represented;<sup>4</sup> nor does the remembrance of them fail to profit the soul, since they are not preserved in the memory save with love for that which they represent; and, provided the soul pays no more heed to them than is necessary for this purpose,<sup>5</sup> they will ever assist it to union with God, allowing the soul to soar upwards (when God grants it that favour) from the superficial image<sup>6</sup> to the living God, forgetting every creature and everything that belongs to creatures.<sup>7</sup>

## CHAPTER XVI

*Which begins to treat of the dark night of the will. Makes a division between the affections of the will.*<sup>8</sup>

WE should have accomplished nothing by the purgation of the understanding in order to ground it in the virtue of faith, and by the purgation of the memory<sup>9</sup> in order to ground it in hope, if we purged not the will also according to the third virtue, which is charity,<sup>10</sup> whereby the works that are done in faith live and have great

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'disturbs and hinders us.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'of images and visions that are interior and are formed in the soul.'

<sup>3</sup> B: 'sets corporeally before us' [P. Silverio, in a note, prefers this reading]. A, Alc.: 'sets naturally before us.' E.p.: 'which our mother the Church sets before us.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'because naught . . . represented.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'and, provided the soul uses them for this purpose.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the painted image.']

<sup>7</sup> A, B have here: 'End of the third book,' the chapters which follow being placed in the fourth book.

<sup>8</sup> A, B omit this second sentence.

<sup>9</sup> E.p. adds: 'in the sense referred to in the sixth chapter of the second book.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: 'if we purged not the will also with respect to charity.'

merit, and without it are of no worth. For, as Saint James says: 'Without works of charity, faith is dead.'<sup>1</sup> And, now that we have to treat of the active detachment and night of this faculty, in order to form it and make it perfect in this virtue of the charity of God, I find no more fitting authority than that which is written in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, where Moses says: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole strength.'<sup>2</sup> Herein is contained all that the spiritual man ought to do, and all that I have here to teach him, so that he may truly attain to God, through union of the will, by means of charity. For herein man is commanded to employ all the faculties and desires and operations and affections of his soul in God, so that all the ability and strength of his soul may serve for no more than this, according to that which David says, in these words: *Fortitudinem meam ad te custodiam*.<sup>3</sup>

2. The strength of the soul consists in its faculties, passions and desires, all of which are governed by the will. Now when these faculties, passions and desires are directed by the will toward God, and turned away from all that is not God, then the strength of the soul is kept for God, and thus the soul is able to love God with all its strength. And, to the end that the soul may do this, we shall here treat of the purgation from the will of all its unruly affections, whence arise unruly operations, affections and desires,<sup>4</sup> and whence also arises its failure to keep all its strength for God. These affections and passions are four, namely: joy, hope, grief and fear. These passions, when they are controlled by reason according to the way of God, so that the soul rejoices only in that which is purely the honour and glory of God, and hopes for naught else, neither grieves save for things that concern this, neither fears aught save God alone, it is clear that the strength and ability of the soul are being directed toward God and kept for Him. For, the more the soul rejoices in any other thing than God, the less completely will it centre its rejoicing in God;<sup>5</sup> and the more it hopes in aught else, the less will it hope in God; and so with the other passions.

3. And in order to give fuller instructions concerning this, we shall treat, in turn and in detail, as is our custom, of each of these four passions and of the desires of the will. For the whole business of attaining to union with God consists in purging the will from its affections

<sup>1</sup> St. James ii, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy vi, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lviii, 10 [A.V., lix, 9].

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'whence arise . . . and desires.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the less strongly will its rejoicing be employed in God.']

and desires; so that thus it may no longer be a base, human will, but may become a Divine will, being made one<sup>1</sup> with the will of God.

4. These four passions have the greater dominion in the soul, and assail it the more vehemently, when the will is less strongly attached to God and more dependent on the creatures. For then it rejoices very readily at things that merit not rejoicing, hopes in that which brings no profit, grieves over that in which perchance it ought to rejoice, and fears where there is no reason for fearing.

5. From these affections, when they are unbridled, arise in the soul all the vices and imperfections which it possesses, and likewise, when they are ordered and composed, all its virtues. And it must be known that, if one of them should become ordered and controlled by reason, the rest will become so likewise; for these four passions of the soul are so closely and intimately united to one another that the actual direction of one is the virtual direction of the others; and if one be actually recollected the other three will virtually and proportionately be recollected likewise. For, if the will rejoice in anything, it will as a result hope for the same thing to the extent of its rejoicing, and herein are virtually included grief and fear with regard to the same thing; and, in proportion as desire for these is taken away, fear and grief concerning them are likewise gradually lost, and hope for them is removed.<sup>2</sup> For the will, with these four passions, is denoted by that figure which was seen by Ezechiel, of four beasts with one body, which had four faces; and the wings of the one were joined to those of the other, and each one went straight before his face, and when they went forward they turned not back.<sup>3</sup> And thus in the same manner the wings of each one of these affections are joined to those of each of the others, so that, in whichever direction one of them turns—that is, in its operation—the others of necessity go with it virtually also; and, when one of them descends, as is there said, they must all descend, and, when one is lifted up, they will all be lifted up. Where thy hope is, thither will go thy joy and fear and grief; and, if thy hope returns, the others will return, and so of the rest.

6. Wherefore thou must take note<sup>4</sup> that, wheresoever one of these passions is, thither will go likewise the whole soul and the will and the other faculties, and they will all live as captives to this passion, and the

<sup>1</sup> [The original is stronger: 'one same thing.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'after the manner (though it is not this that is there meant) of those four beasts that were seen by Ezechiel.'

<sup>3</sup> Ezechiel i, 5-9.

<sup>4</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'O spiritual man.'

other three passions<sup>1</sup> will be living in it also, to afflict the soul with their captivity,<sup>2</sup> and not to allow it to fly upward to the liberty and rest of sweet contemplation and union. For this cause Boetius told thee that, if thou shouldst desire to understand truth with clear light, thou must cast from thee joys, hope, fear and grief.<sup>3</sup> For, as long as these passions reign, they allow not the soul to remain in the tranquillity and peace which are necessary for the wisdom which, by natural or supernatural means, it is capable of receiving.

## CHAPTER XVII

*Which begins to treat of the first affections of the will. Describes the nature of joy and makes a distinction between the things in which the will can rejoice.*

THE first of the passions of the soul and affections of the will is joy, which, in so far as concerns that<sup>4</sup> which we propose to say about it, is naught else than a satisfaction of the will together with esteem for something which it considers desirable; for the will never rejoices save when an object affords it appreciation and satisfaction. This has reference to active joy, which arises when the soul clearly and distinctly understands the reason for its rejoicing, and when it is in its own power to rejoice or not. There is another and a passive joy, a condition in which the will may find itself rejoicing without understanding clearly and distinctly the reason for its rejoicing, and which also occurs at times when it does understand this; but it is not in the soul's power<sup>5</sup> to rejoice or not. Of this condition we shall speak hereafter. For the present we shall speak of joy when it is active and voluntary and arises from things that are distinct and clear.

2. Joy may arise from six kinds of good things or blessings,<sup>6</sup> namely: temporal, natural, sensual, moral, supernatural and spiritual. Of these we shall speak in their order, controlling the will with regard to them so that it may not be encumbered by them and fail to place the strength of its joy in God. To this end it is well to presuppose one

<sup>1</sup> A: 'and the other three faculties, or rather passions.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'with their captivity.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 158, above.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'which, with regard to that.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. adds: 'at that time.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lir.*, 'things or blessings.' The word here translated 'blessings' is *bienes*, often rendered 'goods.' I use 'blessings' or 'good things' in the following chapters, according as best suits the context.]

fundamental truth, which will be as a staff whereon we should ever lean as we progress; and it will be well to have understood it, because it is the light whereby we should be guided and whereby we may understand this doctrine, and direct our rejoicing in all these blessings to God. This truth is that the will must never rejoice save only in that which is to the honour and glory of God; and that the greatest honour we can show to Him is that of serving Him according to evangelical perfection; and anything that has naught to do with this is of no value and profit to man.

## CHAPTER XVIII

*Which treats of joy with respect to temporal blessings. Describes how joy in them must be directed to God.*

THE first kind of blessing of which we have spoken is temporal. And by temporal blessings we here understand riches, rank, office and other things that men desire; and children, relatives, marriages, etc.: all of which are things wherein the will may rejoice. But it is clear how vain a thing it is for men to rejoice in riches, titles, rank, office and other such things which they are wont to desire; for, if a man were the better servant of God for being rich, he ought to rejoice in riches; but in fact they are rather a cause<sup>1</sup> for his giving offence to God, even as the Wise Man teaches, saying: 'Son, if thou be rich, thou shalt not be free from sin.'<sup>2</sup> Although it is true that temporal blessings do not necessarily of themselves cause sin, yet, through the frailty of its affections, the heart of man habitually clings to them and fails God (which is a sin, for to fail God is sin<sup>3</sup>); it is for this cause that the Wise Man says: 'Thou shalt not be free from sin.' For this reason the Lord<sup>4</sup> described riches, in the Gospel, as thorns,<sup>5</sup> in order to show that he who touches them<sup>6</sup> with the will shall be wounded by some sin. And that exclamation which He makes in the Gospel,<sup>7</sup> saying: 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter the Kingdom of the heavens'—that is to say, they that have joy in riches—clearly shows that man must not rejoice in riches, since he exposes himself thereby

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'but rather they may be a cause.'

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiasticus xi, 10.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'for to fail God is sin.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'For this reason Jesus Christ our Lord.'

<sup>5</sup> St. Matthew xiii, 22; St. Luke viii, 14.

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'handles them.']

<sup>7</sup> So Alc. A, B: 'which He makes in Saint Luke, and which is so much to be feared.' E.p.: 'which He makes in Saint Matthew, and which is so much to be feared.'

to such great peril.<sup>1</sup> And David, in order to withdraw us from this peril, said likewise: 'If riches abound, set not your heart on them.'<sup>2</sup> And I will not here quote further testimony on so clear a matter.

2. For in that case I should never cease quoting Scripture, nor should I cease<sup>3</sup> describing the evils which Solomon imputes to riches in Ecclesiastes. Solomon was a man who had possessed great riches, and, knowing well what they were, said: 'All things that are under the sun are vanity of vanities, vexation of spirit and vain solicitude of the mind.'<sup>4</sup> And he that loves riches, he said, shall reap no fruit from them.<sup>5</sup> And he adds that riches are kept to the hurt of their owner,<sup>6</sup> as we see in the Gospel, where it was said from Heaven to the man that rejoiced because he had kept<sup>7</sup> many fruits for many years: 'Fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee to give account thereof, and whose shall be that which thou hast provided?'<sup>8</sup> And finally, David teaches us the same, saying: 'Let us have no envy when our neighbour becomes rich, for it will profit him nothing in the life to come';<sup>9</sup> meaning thereby that we might rather have pity on him.

3. It follows, then, that a man must neither rejoice in riches when he has them, nor when his brother has them,<sup>10</sup> unless they help them to serve God. For if ever it is allowable to rejoice in them,<sup>11</sup> it will be when they are spent and employed in the service of God, for otherwise no profit will be derived from them. And the same is to be understood of other blessings (titles, offices, etc.), in all of which it is vain to rejoice if a man feel not that God is the better served because of them and the way to eternal life is made more secure. And as it cannot be clearly known if this is so (if God is better served, etc.), it would be a vain thing to rejoice in these things deliberately, since such a joy<sup>12</sup> cannot be reasonable. For, as the Lord says: 'If a man gain all the world, he may yet lose his soul.'<sup>13</sup> There is naught, then, wherein to rejoice save in the fact that God is better served.

4. Neither is there cause for rejoicing in children because they are many, or rich, or endowed with natural graces and talents and the good things of fortune, but only if they serve God. For Absalom, the

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew xix, 23; St. Luke xviii, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxi, 11 [A.V., lxii, 10].

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'quoting Scripture, nor should I cease.'

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes i, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Ecclesiastes v, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiastes v, 12.

<sup>7</sup> [*guardados*.] Alc., erroneously, has: 'he had gained' [*ganados*].

<sup>8</sup> St. Luke xii, 20.

<sup>9</sup> Psalm xlviii, 17-18 [A.V., xlix, 16-17].

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: '... rejoice because he has riches, nor because his brother has them.'

<sup>11</sup> A, Alc. [and P. Silverio] add: 'as one will rejoice in riches.'

<sup>12</sup> E.p.: 'such a joy in them.'

<sup>13</sup> St. Matthew xvi, 26. E.p. has: 'If a man gain all the world, it profits him little, if he suffers detriment in his soul.'

son of David, found neither his beauty nor his riches nor his lineage of any service to him because he served not God.<sup>1</sup> Hence it was a vain thing to have rejoiced in such a son. For this reason it is also a vain thing for men to desire to have children, as do some who trouble and disturb everyone with their desire for them, since they know not if such children will be good and serve God. Nor do they know if their satisfaction in them will be turned into pain; nor if the comfort and consolation which they should have from them will change to disquiet and trial; and the honour which they should bring them, into dishonour; nor if they will cause them to give greater offence to God, as happens to many. Of these Christ says that they go round about the sea and the land to enrich them and to make them doubly the children of perdition which they are themselves.<sup>2</sup>

5. Wherefore, though all things smile upon a man and all that he does turns out prosperously,<sup>3</sup> he ought to have misgivings rather than to rejoice; for these things increase the occasion and peril of his forgetting God.<sup>4</sup> For this cause Solomon says, in Ecclesiastes, that he was cautious: 'Laughter I counted error and to rejoicing I said, "Why art thou vainly deceived?"'<sup>5</sup> Which is as though he had said: When things smiled upon me I counted it error and deception to rejoice in them; for without doubt it is great error and folly on the part of a man if he rejoice when things are bright and pleasant for him, knowing not of a certainty that there will come to him thence some eternal good. The heart of the fool, says the Wise Man, is where there is mirth, but that of the wise man is where there is sorrow.<sup>6</sup> For mirth<sup>7</sup> blinds the heart and allows it not to consider things and ponder them; but sadness makes a man open his eyes and look at the profit and the harm of them. And hence it is that, as he himself says, anger is better than laughter.<sup>8</sup> Wherefore it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; for in the former is figured the end of all men,<sup>9</sup> as the Wise Man says likewise.

6. It would therefore be vanity for a woman or her husband to rejoice in their marriage when they know not clearly that they are serving God better thereby. They ought rather to feel confounded, since matrimony is a cause, as Saint Paul says, whereby each one sets

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings [A.V., 2 Samuel] xiv, 25.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew xxiii, 15.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'and, as they say, [good things] fall into his mouth.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'and of offending Him, as we have said.'

<sup>5</sup> Ecclesiastes ii, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiastes vii, 5.

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'For vain mirth.'

<sup>8</sup> Ecclesiastes vii, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ecclesiastes vii, 3.

his heart upon the other and keeps it not wholly with God. Wherefore he says: 'If thou shouldst find thyself free from a wife, desire not to seek a wife; while he that has one already should walk with such freedom of heart as though he had her not.'<sup>1</sup> This, together with what we have said concerning temporal blessings, he teaches us himself, in these words: 'This is certain; as I say to you, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth that they also who have wives be as if they had none; and they that weep, as them that weep not; and they that rejoice, as them that rejoice not; and they that buy, as them that possess not; and they that use this world, as them that use it not.'<sup>2</sup> All this he says to show us that we must not set our rejoicing<sup>3</sup> upon any other thing than that which tends to the service of God, since the rest is vanity and a thing which profits not; for joy that is not according to God can bring the soul no profit.<sup>4</sup>

## CHAPTER XIX

*Of the evils that may befall the soul when it sets its rejoicing upon temporal blessings.*

**I**F we had to describe the evils which encompass the soul when it sets the affections of its will upon temporal blessings, neither ink nor paper would suffice us and our time would be too short. For from very small beginnings a man may attain to great evils and destroy great blessings; even as from a spark of fire, if it be not quenched, may be enkindled great fires which set the world ablaze. All these evils have their root and origin in one important evil of a privative kind that is contained in this joy—namely, withdrawal from God. For even as, in the soul that is united with Him by the affection of its will, there are born all blessings, even so, when it withdraws itself from Him because of this creature affection, there beset it all evils and disasters proportionately to the joy and affection wherewith it is united with the creature; for this is inherent in<sup>5</sup> withdrawal from God. Wherefore a

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians vii, 27.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians vii, 29–30.

<sup>3</sup> [The original reads: 'to show us that to set,' etc., leaving the sentence grammatically incomplete. P. Gerardo omits 'since the rest' and reads: 'to show us that to set . . . service of God is vanity,' etc.] Alc. omits all the paragraph down to this point, reading: 'And thus we must not set our rejoicing . . .'

<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'bring it no profit.'] A, B: ' . . . to God cannot please the soul.' E.p.: ' . . . to God cannot do the soul good.'

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'for this is.']

soul may expect the evils which assail it to be greater or less according to the greater or lesser degree of its withdrawal from God. These evils may be extensive or intensive; for the most part they are both together.

2. This privative evil, whence, we say, arise other privative and positive evils, has four degrees, each one worse than the other. And, when the soul compasses the fourth degree, it will have compassed all the evils and depravities that arise in this connection.<sup>1</sup> These four degrees are well indicated by Moses in Deuteronomy in these words, where he says: 'The beloved grew fat and kicked. He grew fat and became swollen and gross.'<sup>2</sup> He forsook God his Maker and departed from God his Salvation.'<sup>3</sup>

3. This growing fat of the soul, which was loved before it grew fat,<sup>4</sup> indicates absorption in this joy of creatures. And hence arises the first degree of this evil, namely the going backward; which is a certain blunting of the mind with regard to God, an obscuring of the blessings of God like the obscuring of the air by mist, so that it cannot be clearly illumined by the light of the sun. For, precisely when the spiritual person sets his rejoicing upon anything, and gives rein to his desire for foolish things, he becomes blind as to God, and the simple intelligence of his judgment becomes clouded, even as the Divine Spirit teaches in the Book of Wisdom, saying: 'The use and association of vanity<sup>5</sup> and scorn obscureth good things, and inconstancy of desire overturneth and perverteth the sense and judgment that are without malice.'<sup>6</sup> Here the Holy Spirit shows that, although there be no malice<sup>7</sup> conceived in the understanding of the soul, concupiscence and rejoicing in creatures suffice of themselves to create in the soul the first degree of this evil, which is the blunting of the mind and the darkening of the judgment, by which the truth is understood and each thing honestly judged as it is.

4. Holiness and good judgment suffice not to save a man from falling into this evil, if he gives way to concupiscence or rejoicing in temporal things. For this reason God warned us by uttering these words through Moses: 'Thou shalt take no gifts, which blind even the prudent.'<sup>8</sup> And this was addressed particularly to those who were to be

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'that can be told in this case.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'The beloved became fat and returned; he became swollen and gross.'

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy xxxii, 15.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'This becoming fat of the soul, which previously was loved . . .'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'The false appearance of vanity.'

<sup>6</sup> Wisdom iv, 12.

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'no precedent malice.'

<sup>8</sup> Exodus xxiii, 8.

judges; for these have need to keep their judgment clear and alert, which they will be unable to do if they covet and rejoice in gifts. And for this cause likewise God commanded Moses to appoint judges from those who abhorred avarice, so that their judgment should not be blunted with the lust of the passions.<sup>1</sup> And thus he says not only that they should not desire it, but that they should abhor it. For, if a man is to be perfectly defended from the affection of love, he must preserve an abhorrence of it, defending himself by means of the one thing against its contrary. The reason why the prophet Samuel, for example, was always so upright and enlightened a judge is that (as he said in the Book of the Kings) he had never received a gift from any man.<sup>2</sup>

5. The second degree of this privative evil arises from the first, which is indicated in the words following the passage already quoted, namely: 'He grew fat and became swollen and gross.'<sup>3</sup> And thus this second degree is dilation of the will through the acquisition of greater liberty in temporal things; which consists in no longer attaching so much importance to them, nor troubling oneself about them, nor esteeming so highly the joy and pleasure that come from created blessings. And this will have arisen in the soul from its having in the first place given rein to rejoicing; for, through giving way to it, the soul has become swollen with it, as is said in that passage, and that fatness of rejoicing and desire has caused it to dilate and extend its will more freely toward the creatures. And this brings with it great evils. For this second degree causes the soul to withdraw itself from the things of God, and from holy practices, and to take no pleasure in them, because it takes pleasure in other things and devotes itself continually to many imperfections and follies<sup>4</sup> and to joys and vain pleasures.

6. And when this second degree is consummated, it withdraws a man wholly from the practices which he followed continually and makes his whole mind and covetousness to be given to secular things. And those who are affected by this second degree not only have their judgment and understanding darkened so that they cannot recognize truth and justice, like those who are in the first degree, but they are also very weak and lukewarm and careless<sup>5</sup> in acquiring knowledge of, and in practising, truth and justice, even as Isaias says of them in these words: 'They all love gifts and allow themselves to be carried away by

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xviii, 21-2.

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy xxxii, 15. E.p. omits: 'grew fat and.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'and many follies.'

<sup>4</sup> 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] xii, 3.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and careless.'

rewards, and they judge not the orphan, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them that they may give heed to it.<sup>1</sup> This comes not to pass in them without sin, especially when to do these things is incumbent upon them because of their office. For those who are affected by this degree are not free from malice as are those of the first degree. And thus they withdraw themselves more and more from justice and virtues, since their will reaches out more and more<sup>2</sup> in affection for creatures. Wherefore, the characteristics of those who are in this second degree are great lukewarmness in spiritual things and failure to do their duty by them; they practise them from formality or from compulsion or from the habit which they have formed of practising them, rather than because they love them.

7. The third degree of this privative evil is a complete falling away from God, neglect to fulfil His law in order not to lose worldly things and blessings,<sup>3</sup> and relapse into mortal sin through covetousness. And this third degree is described in the words following the passage quoted above, which says: 'He forsook God his Maker.'<sup>4</sup> In this degree are included all who have the faculties of the soul absorbed in things of the world and in riches and commerce,<sup>5</sup> in such a way that they care nothing for fulfilling the obligations of the law of God. And they are very forgetful and dull with respect to that which touches their salvation, and have a correspondingly greater ardour and shrewdness with respect to things of the world. So much so that in the Gospel Christ calls them children of this world, and says of them that they are more prudent and acute in their affairs than are the children of light in their own.<sup>6</sup> And thus they are as nothing in God's business, whereas in the world's business they are everything. And these are the truly avaricious, who have extended and dispersed their desire and joy on things created, and this with such affection that they cannot be satisfied; on the contrary, their desire and their thirst grow all the more because they are farther withdrawn from the only source that could satisfy them, which is God. For it is of these that God Himself speaks through Jeremias, saying: 'They have forsaken Me, Who am the fountain of living water, and they have digged to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water.'<sup>7</sup> And this is the reason why the covetous man finds

<sup>1</sup> Isaias i, 23.

<sup>2</sup> A, e.p.: '... their will becomes more and more enkindled ...' [The change is a slight one: *encendiendo* for *extendiendo*.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'not to lose the trifling things of the world.'

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy xxxii, 15.

<sup>6</sup> St. Luke xvi, 8.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'commerce with it.'

<sup>7</sup> Jeremias ii, 13.

naught among the creatures wherewith he can quench his thirst, but only that which increases it. These persons are they that fall into countless kinds of sin through love of temporal blessings and the evils which afflict them are innumerable. And of these David says: *Transierunt in affectum cordis.*<sup>1</sup>

8. The fourth degree of this privative evil is indicated in the last words of our passage, which says: 'And he departed from God his Salvation.'<sup>2</sup> To this degree come those of the third degree whereof we have just spoken. For, through his not giving heed to setting his heart upon the law of God because of temporal blessings, the soul of the covetous man departs far from God according to his memory, understanding and will, forgetting Him as though He were not his God, which comes to pass because he has made for himself a god of money and of temporal blessings,<sup>3</sup> as Saint Paul says when he describes avarice as slavery to idols.<sup>4</sup> For this fourth degree leads a man as far as to forget God, and to set his heart, which he should have set formally upon God, formally upon money, as though he had no god beside.

9. To this fourth degree belong those who hesitate not to subject Divine and supernatural things to temporal things, as to their God, when they ought to do the contrary, and subject temporal things to God, if they considered Him as their God, as would be in accordance with reason.<sup>5</sup> To these belonged the iniquitous<sup>6</sup> Balaam, who sold the grace that God had given to him.<sup>7</sup> And also Simon Magus, who thought to value the grace of God in terms of money, and desired to buy it.<sup>8</sup> In doing this he showed a greater esteem for money; and he thought there were those who similarly esteemed it, and would give grace for money. There are many nowadays who in many other ways belong to this fourth degree; their reason is darkened to spiritual things by covetousness; they serve money and not God, and are influenced by money and not by God, putting first the cost of a thing and not its Divine worth and reward, and in many ways making money their principal god and end, and setting it before the final end, which is God.

10. To this last degree belong also those miserable souls who are so

<sup>1</sup> ['They have passed into the affection of the heart.'] Psalm lxxii, 7 [A.V. lxxiii, 7]. Only e.p. has this quotation in its Spanish form. Alc. adds the word *exponat*.

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy xxxii, 15.

<sup>3</sup> A, e.p.: '... he has made money and temporal blessings a god for himself.'

<sup>4</sup> Colossians iii, 5.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'if they considered Him as their God.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'the impious.'

<sup>7</sup> Numbers xxii, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Acts viii, 18-19.

greatly in love with their own goods that they take them for their god, so much so that they scruple not to sacrifice their lives for them, when they see that this god of theirs is suffering some temporal harm. They abandon themselves to despair and take their own lives for their miserable ends, showing by their own acts how wretched is the reward which such a god as theirs bestows. For when they can no longer hope for aught from him he gives them despair<sup>1</sup> and death; and those whom he pursues not to this last evil of death he condemns to a dying life<sup>2</sup> in the griefs of anxiety and in many other miseries, allowing no mirth to enter their heart, and naught that is of earth to bring them satisfaction. They continually pay the tribute of their heart to money by their yearning for it and hoarding of it for the final calamity of their just perdition, as the Wise Man warns them, saying: 'Riches are kept to the hurt of their owner.'<sup>3</sup>

11. And to this fourth degree belong those of whom Saint Paul says: *Tradidit illos in reprobum sensum*.<sup>4</sup> For joy, when it strives after possessions as its final goal, drags man down to these evils. But those on whom it inflicts lesser evils are also to be sorely pitied, since, as we have said, their souls are driven far backward upon the way<sup>5</sup> of God. Wherefore, as David says: Be not thou afraid when a man shall be made rich: that is, envy him not, thinking that he outstrips thee, for, when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away, neither shall his glory nor his joy descend with him.<sup>6</sup>

## CHAPTER XX

*Of the benefits that come to the soul from its withdrawal of joy from temporal things.*

THE spiritual man, then, must look carefully to it that his heart and his rejoicing begin not to lay hold upon temporal things; he must fear lest from being little it should grow to be great, and should increase from one degree to another. For little things, in time, become great; and from a small beginning there comes in the

<sup>1</sup> The remainder of this chapter is omitted in Alc.

<sup>2</sup> So e.p. [*lit.*, 'to live dying']. A: 'to live living'; B: 'to die living.'

<sup>3</sup> Ecclesiastes v, 11-12.

<sup>4</sup> ['He delivered them up to a reprobate sense.'] Romans i, 28.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'upon the road.'

<sup>6</sup> Psalm xlviii, 17-18 [A.V., xlix, 16-17].

end a great matter,<sup>1</sup> even as a spark suffices to set a mountain on fire and to burn up the whole world.<sup>2</sup> And let him never be self-confident because his attachment is small, and fail to uproot it instantly because he thinks that he will do so later. For if, when it is so small and in its beginnings, he has not the courage to make an end of it, how does he suppose, and presume, that he will be able to do so when it is great and more deeply rooted. The more so since Our Lord said in the Gospel: 'He that is unfaithful in little will be unfaithful also in much.'<sup>3</sup> For he that avoids the small sin will not fall into the great sin; but great evil is inherent in the small sin,<sup>4</sup> since it has already penetrated within the fence and wall of the heart; and as the proverb says: Once begun, half done. Wherefore David warns us, saying: 'Though riches abound, let us not apply our heart to them.'<sup>5</sup>

2. Although a man might not do this for the sake of God and of the obligations of Christian perfection, he should nevertheless do it because of the temporal advantages that result from it, to say nothing of the spiritual advantages, and he should free his heart completely from all rejoicing in the things mentioned above. And thus, not only will he free himself from the pestilent evils which we have described in the last chapter, but, in addition to this, he will withdraw his joy from temporal blessings and acquire the virtue of liberality, which is one of the principal attributes of God,<sup>6</sup> and can in no wise coexist with covetousness. Apart from this, he will acquire liberty of soul, clarity of reason, rest, tranquillity and peaceful confidence in God and a true reverence and worship of God which comes from the will.<sup>7</sup> He will find greater joy and recreation in the creatures through his detachment from them, for he cannot rejoice in them if he look upon them with attachment to them as to his own. Attachment is an anxiety that, like a bond, ties the spirit down to the earth and allows it no enlargement of heart. He will also acquire, in his detachment from things, a clear conception of them, so that he can well understand the truths

<sup>1</sup> Thus the Codices. E.p. alters this to 'a great evil.' [P. Silverio supports the emendation.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and to burn up the whole world.' [The word rendered 'mountain' may also mean 'wood.' Cf. St. James iii, 5, Vulgate.]

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke xvi, 10.

<sup>4</sup> [The word 'sin' is not in the original of this sentence, which reads 'the small . . . the great . . .' etc.]

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxi, 11 [A.V., lxii, 10. Cf. p. 247, n. 2, above]. E.p.: 'let us not attach our heart to them.'

<sup>6</sup> So Alc., e.p. A, B: 'one of the principal virtues of God, or, rather, attributes.'

<sup>7</sup> A, B: 'which comes from liberty.' [The word translated 'reverence' normally implies respectful acquiescence.]

relating to them, both naturally and supernaturally. He will therefore enjoy them very differently from one who is attached to them, and he will have a great advantage and superiority over such a one. For, while he enjoys them according to their truth, the other enjoys them according to their falseness;<sup>1</sup> the one appreciates the best side of them and the other the worst; the one rejoices in their substance; the other, whose sense is bound to them, in their accident. For sense cannot grasp or attain to more than the accident, but the spirit, purged of the clouds and species of accident, penetrates the truth and worth of things, for this is its object. Wherefore joy, like a cloud, darkens the judgment, since there can be no voluntary joy in creatures without voluntary attachment, even as there can be no joy which is passion when there is no habitual attachment in the heart;<sup>2</sup> and the renunciation and purgation of such joy leave the judgment clear, even as the mists leave the air clear when they are scattered.

3. This man, then, rejoices in all things—since his joy is dependent upon none of them—as if he had them all; and this other, through looking upon them with a particular sense of ownership, loses in a general sense all the pleasure of them all. This former man, having none of them in his heart, possesses them all, as Saint Paul says, in great freedom.<sup>3</sup> This latter man, inasmuch as he has something of them through the attachment of his will, neither has nor possesses anything; it is rather they that have possessed<sup>4</sup> his heart, and he is, as it were, a sorrowing captive. Wherefore, if he desire to have a certain degree of joy in creatures, he must of necessity have an equal degree of disquietude and grief in his heart, since it is seized and possessed by them. But he that is detached is untroubled by anxieties, either in prayer or apart from it; and thus, without losing time, he readily gains great spiritual treasure. But the other man loses everything, running to and fro upon the chain by which his heart is attached and bound; and with all his diligence he can still hardly free himself for a short time from this bond of thought and rejoicing by which his heart is bound. The spiritual man, then, must restrain the first motion of his heart towards creatures, remembering the premiss which we have here laid down, that there is naught wherein a man must rejoice, save in his service of God, and in his striving for His glory and honour in all things, directing all things solely to this end and turning aside from

<sup>1</sup> Alc. omits the rest of this sentence and the whole of the next.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. [for 'when . . . heart'] reads: 'without voluntary attachment.'

<sup>3</sup> 2 Corinthians vi, 10.

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'they that have seized.'

vanity in them, looking in them neither for his own joy nor for his consolation.

4. There is another very great and important benefit in this detachment of the rejoicing from creatures—namely, that it leaves the heart free for God. This is the dispositive foundation of all the favours which God will grant to the soul, and without this disposition He grants them not. And they are such that, even from the temporal standpoint, for one joy which the soul renounces for love of Him and for the perfection of the Gospel, He will give him a hundred in this life, as His Majesty promises in the same Gospel.<sup>1</sup> But, even were there not so high a rate of interest, the spiritual man should quench these creature joys in his soul because of the displeasure which they give to God. For we see in the Gospel that, simply because that rich man rejoiced at having goods laid up for many years, God was so greatly angered that He told him that his soul would be brought to account on that same night.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, we must believe<sup>3</sup> that, whensoever we rejoice vainly, God is beholding us and preparing some punishment and bitter draught according to our deserts, so that the pain which results from the joy may sometimes be a hundred times greater<sup>4</sup> than the joy. For, although it is true, as Saint John says on this matter, in the Apocalypse, concerning Babylon, that as much as she had rejoiced and lived in delights, so much torment and sorrow should be given her,<sup>5</sup> yet this is not to say that the pain will not be greater than the joy, which indeed it will be, since for brief pleasures are given eternal torments. The words mean that there shall be nothing without its particular punishment, for He Who will punish the idle word will not pardon vain rejoicing.

## CHAPTER XXI

*Which describes how it is vanity to set the rejoicing of the will upon the good things of nature, and how the soul must direct itself, by means of them, to God.*

**B**y natural blessings we here understand beauty, grace, comeliness, bodily constitution and all other bodily endowments; and likewise, in the soul, good understanding, discretion and other things that pertain to reason. Many a man sets his rejoicing upon all

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew xix, 29.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'Therefore, we may fear.'

<sup>3</sup> Apocalypse xviii, 7.

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke xii, 20.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: '... may often be greater.'

these gifts, to the end that he himself, or those that belong to him, may possess them, and for no other reason, and gives no thanks to God Who bestows them on him so that He may be the better known and loved by him because of them. But to rejoice for this cause alone is vanity and deception, as Solomon says in these words: 'Deceitful is grace and vain is beauty; the woman who fears God, she shall be praised.'<sup>1</sup> Here he teaches us that a man ought rather to be fearful because of these natural gifts, since he may easily be distracted<sup>2</sup> by them from the love of God, and, if he be attracted by them, he may fall into vanity and be deceived. For this reason bodily grace is said to be deceptive because it deceives a man in the way<sup>3</sup> and attracts him to that which beseems him not, through vain joy and complacency, either in himself or in others that have such grace. And it is said that beauty is vain because it causes a man to fall in many ways when he esteems it and rejoices in it, for he should rejoice only if he serves God or others through it. But he ought rather to fear and harbour misgivings lest perchance his natural graces and gifts should be a cause of his offending God, either by his vain presumption or by the extreme affection<sup>4</sup> with which he regards them. Wherefore he that has such gifts should be cautious and live carefully, lest, by his vain ostentation, he give cause to any man to withdraw his heart in the smallest degree from God. For these graces and gifts of nature are so full of provocation and occasion of evil, both to him that possesses them and to him that looks upon them, that there is hardly any who entirely escapes from binding and entangling his heart in them. We have heard that many spiritual persons, who had certain of these gifts, had such fear of this that they prayed God to disfigure them, lest they should be a cause and occasion of any vain joy or affection to themselves or to others, and God granted their prayer.

2. The spiritual man, then, must purge his will, and make it to be blind to this vain rejoicing, bearing in mind that beauty and all other natural gifts are but earth, and that they come from the earth and will return thither; and that grace and beauty are the smoke and vapour belonging to this same earth; and that they must be held and esteemed as such by any man who desires not to fall into vanity, but will direct his heart to God in these matters, with rejoicing and gladness, because God is in Himself all these beauties and graces in the most eminent degree, and is infinitely high above all created things. And, as David says, they are all like a garment and shall grow old and pass away, and

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs xxxi, 30.

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'in the road.'

<sup>2</sup> A, B: 'he kept back.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'the strange affection.'

He alone remains immutable for ever.<sup>1</sup> Wherefore, if in all these matters a man direct not his rejoicing to God, it will ever be false and deceptive. For of such a man is that saying of Solomon to be understood, where he addresses joy in the creatures, saying: 'To joy I said: "Why art thou vainly deceived?"'<sup>2</sup> That is, when the heart allows itself to be attracted by the creatures.

## CHAPTER XXII

*Of the evils which come to the soul when it sets the rejoicing of its will upon the good things of nature.*

**A**LTHOUGH many of these evils and benefits that I am describing in treating of these kinds of joy are common to all, yet, because they follow directly from joy and detachment from joy (although comprised under any one of these six divisions which I am treating), therefore I speak under each heading of some evils and benefits which are also found under another, since these, as I say, are connected with that joy which belongs to them all. But my principal intent is to speak of the particular evils and benefits which come to the soul, with respect to each thing, through its rejoicing or not rejoicing in it. These I call particular evils, because they are primarily and immediately caused by one particular kind of rejoicing, and are not, save in a secondary and mediate sense, caused by another. The evil of spiritual lukewarmness, for example, is caused directly by any and every kind of joy, and this evil is therefore common to all these six kinds; but fornication is a particular evil, which is the direct result only of joy in the good things of nature of which we are speaking.

2. The spiritual and bodily evils, then, which directly and effectively come to the soul when it sets its rejoicing on the good things of nature are reduced to six principal evils. The first is vainglory, presumption, pride and disesteem of our neighbour; for a man cannot cast<sup>3</sup> eyes of esteem on one thing without taking them from the rest. From this follows, at the least, a real disesteem<sup>4</sup> for everything else; for naturally, by setting our esteem on one thing, we withdraw our heart from all things else and set it upon the thing esteemed; and from this real contempt it is very easy to fall into an intentional and voluntary contempt

<sup>1</sup> Psalm ci, 27 [A.V., cii, 26-7].

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'cannot excessively cast.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'a real and, as it were, negative disesteem.'

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastes ii, 2.

for all these other things, in particular or in general, not only in the heart, but also in speech, when we say that such a thing or<sup>1</sup> such a person is not like such another. The second evil is the moving of the senses to complacency and sensual delight and lust.<sup>2</sup> The third evil comes from falling into adulation and vain praise, wherein is deception and vanity, as *Isaias* says in these words: 'My people, he that praises thee deceives thee.'<sup>3</sup> And the reason is that, although we sometimes speak the truth when we praise grace and beauty, yet it will be a marvel if there is not some evil enwrapped therein or if the person praised is not plunged into vain complacency and rejoicing, or his imperfect intentions and affections are not directed thereto. The fourth evil is of a general kind: it is a serious<sup>4</sup> blunting of the reason and the spiritual sense, such as is effected by rejoicing in temporal good things. In one way, indeed, it is much worse. For as the good things of nature are more closely connected with man than are temporal good things, the joy which they give leaves an impression and effect and trace upon the senses more readily and more effectively, and deadens them more completely. And thus reason and judgment are not free, but are clouded with that affection of joy which is very closely connected with them; and from this arises the fifth evil, which is distraction of the mind by created things. And hence arise and follow lukewarmness and weakness of spirit, which is the sixth evil, and is likewise of a general kind; this is apt to reach such a pitch that a man may find the things of God very tedious and troublesome, and at last even come to abhor them. In this rejoicing purity of spirit is invariably lost—at least, in its essence. For, if any spirituality is discerned, it will be of such a gross and sensual kind as to be hardly spiritual or interior or recollected at all, since it will consist rather in pleasure of sense than in strength of spirit. Since, then, the spirituality of the soul is of so low and weak a character at that time as not to quench the habit of this rejoicing (for this habit alone suffices to destroy pure spirituality, even when the soul is not consenting to the acts of rejoicing), the soul must be living, so to say, in the weakness of sense rather than in the strength of the spirit. Otherwise,<sup>5</sup> it will be seen in the perfection and fortitude which the soul will have when the occasion demands it. Although I do not deny that many virtues may exist together with serious imperfections, no pure or delectable inward spirituality can exist while these joys are

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'such a thing or.'

<sup>3</sup> *Isaias* iii, 12.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'otherwise.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and lust.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lir.*, 'the great']

not quenched; for the flesh reigns<sup>1</sup> within, warring against the spirit, and, although the spirit may be unconscious of the evil, yet at the least it causes it secret distraction.

3. Returning now to speak of that second evil, which contains within itself innumerable other evils, it is impossible to describe with the pen or to express in words the lengths to which it can go, but this is not unknown or secret,<sup>2</sup> nor is the extent of the misery that arises from the setting of our rejoicing on natural beauty and graces. For every day we hear of its causing numerous deaths, the loss by many of their honour, the commission of many insults, the dissipation of much wealth, numerous cases of emulation and strife, of adultery, rape and fornication,<sup>3</sup> and of the fall<sup>4</sup> of many holy men, comparable in number to that third part of the stars of Heaven which was swept down by the tail of the serpent on earth.<sup>5</sup> The fine gold has lost its brilliance and lustre and is become mire; and the notable and noble men of Sion, who were clothed in finest gold, are counted as earthen pitchers that are broken and have become potsherds.<sup>6</sup> How far does the poison of this evil not penetrate?

4. And who drinks not, either little or much, from this golden chalice of the Babylonian woman of the Apocalypse?<sup>7</sup> She seats herself on that great beast, that had seven heads and ten crowns, signifying that there is scarce any man, whether high or low, saint or sinner, who comes not to drink of her wine, to some extent enslaving his heart thereby, for, as is said of her in that place, all the kings of the earth have become drunken with the wine of her prostitution. And she seizes upon all estates of men, even upon the highest and noblest estate—the service of the sanctuary and the Divine priesthood—setting her abominable cup, as Daniel says, in the holy place,<sup>8</sup> and leaving scarcely a single strong man without making him to drink, either little or much, from the wine of this chalice, which is vain rejoicing. For this reason it is said that all the kings of the earth have become drunken with this wine, for very few will be found, however holy they may have been, that have not been to some extent stupefied and bewildered by this draught of the joy and pleasure of natural graces and beauty.

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'the flesh almost reigns here.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'but . . . secret.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'of adultery and rape.'

<sup>4</sup> The Codices [followed by P. Silverio] have 'of the fall to the ground' which e.p. abbreviates [as in the text].

<sup>5</sup> Apocalypse xii, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Lamentations iv, 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Apocalypse xvii, 3-4. Here eleven pages are missing from Alc., which P. Andrés de la Encarnación supplies, taking them from the old MS. which in his time was preserved at Duruelo.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel ix, 27.

5. This phrase 'have become drunken' should be noted. For, however little a man may drink of the wine of this rejoicing, it at once takes hold upon the heart, and stupefies it and works the evil of darkening the reason, as does wine to those who have been corrupted by it. So that, if some antidote be not at once taken against this poison, whereby it may be quickly expelled, the life of the soul is endangered. Its spiritual weakness will increase, bringing it to such a pass that it will be like Samson, when his eyes<sup>1</sup> were put out and the hair of his first strength was cut off, and like Samson it will see itself grinding in the mills, a captive among its enemies;<sup>2</sup> and afterwards, peradventure, it will die the second death among its enemies, even as did he,<sup>3</sup> since the drinking of this rejoicing will produce in them spiritually all those evils that were produced in him physically, and does in fact produce them in many persons to this day. Let his enemies come and say to him afterwards, to his great confusion: Art thou he that broke the knotted cords,<sup>4</sup> that tore asunder the lions, slew the thousand Philistines, broke down the gates and freed himself from all his enemies?

6. Let us conclude, then, by giving the instruction necessary to counteract this poison. And let it be this: As soon as thy heart feels moved by this vain joy in the good things of nature, let it remember how vain a thing it is to rejoice in aught save the service of God, how perilous and how pernicious. Let it consider how great an evil it was for the angels to rejoice and take pleasure in their natural endowments and beauty, since it was this that plunged them into the depths of shame.<sup>5</sup> Let them think, too, how many evils come to men daily through this same vanity, and let them therefore resolve in good time to employ the remedy which the poet commends to those who begin to grow affectioned to such things. 'Make haste now,' he says, 'and use the remedy at the beginning; for when evil things have had time to grow in the heart, remedy and medicine come late.'<sup>6</sup> Look not upon the wine, as the Wise Man says, when its colour is red and when it shines in the glass; it enters pleasantly and bites like a viper and sheds abroad poison like a basilisk.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Codices have: 'when the eyes of his sight . . .' This reading [adopted by P. Silverio] is shortened by e.p., as being pleonastic, to 'when his eyes . . .'

<sup>2</sup> Judges xvi.

<sup>3</sup> The 1630 edition reads: 'even as he died the first [death].'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'the three knotted cords.'

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'since it was through this they fell into the vile abysses.']

<sup>6</sup> So Alc. The other authorities have only: 'medicine comes late.'

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs xxiii, 31-2. Only Alc. and e.p. have: 'and sheds abroad poison [really 'poisons'] like a basilisk.' A, B have 'its poison' and use the word *basilisco*, where Alc., e.p. have *régulo*, with the same meaning.

## CHAPTER XXIII

*Of the benefits which the soul receives from not setting its rejoicing upon the good things of nature.*

MANY are the benefits which come to the soul through the withdrawal of its heart from this rejoicing; for, besides preparing itself for the love of God and the other virtues, it makes a direct way for its own humility, and for a general charity toward its neighbours. For, as it is not led by the apparent<sup>1</sup> good things of nature, which are deceitful, into affection for anyone, the soul remains free and able<sup>2</sup> to love them all rationally and spiritually, as God wills them to be loved. Here it must be understood that none deserves to be loved, save for the virtue that is in him. And, when we love in this way, it is very pleasing to the will of God, and also brings great freedom; and if there be attachment in it, there is greater attachment to God. For, in that case, the more this love grows, the more grows our love toward God; and, the more grows our love toward God, the greater becomes our love for our neighbour. For, when love is grounded in God, the reason for all love is one and the same and the cause of all love is one and the same also.

2. Another excellent benefit comes to the soul from its renunciation of this kind of rejoicing,<sup>3</sup> which is that it fulfils and keeps<sup>4</sup> the counsel of Our Saviour which He gives us through Saint Matthew. 'Let him that will follow Me', He says, 'deny himself.'<sup>5</sup> This the soul could in no wise do if it were to set its rejoicing upon the good things<sup>6</sup> of nature; for he that makes any account of himself neither denies himself nor follows Christ.

3. There is another great benefit in the renunciation of this kind of rejoicing, which is that it produces great tranquillity in the soul, empties it of distractions and brings recollection to the senses, especially to the eyes. For the soul that desires not to rejoice in these things desires neither to look at them nor to attach the other senses to them, lest it should be attracted or entangled by them.<sup>7</sup> Nor will it spend time or thought upon them, being like the prudent serpent, which stops its

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits 'apparent.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'free and clear.']

<sup>3</sup> 'From . . . rejoicing' are words found in Alc. only.

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds: 'with perfection.'

<sup>5</sup> St. Matthew xvi, 24.

<sup>6</sup> A, B, e.p. read: 'the gifts.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits: 'or entangled by them.'

ears that it may not hear the charmers<sup>1</sup> lest they make some impression upon it.<sup>2</sup> For, by guarding its doors, which are the senses, the soul guards itself safely and increases its tranquillity and purity.

4. There is another benefit of no less importance to those that have become proficient in the mortification of this kind of rejoicing, which is that evil things and the knowledge of them neither make an impression upon them nor stain them as they do those to whom they still give any delight. Wherefore the renunciation and mortification of this rejoicing result in spiritual cleanness of soul and body; that is, of spirit and sense; and the soul comes to have an angelical conformity with God, and becomes, both in spirit and in body, a worthy temple of the Holy Spirit. This cannot come to pass if the heart rejoices in natural graces and good things.<sup>3</sup> For this reason it is not necessary to have given consent to any evil thing, or to have remembrance of such;<sup>4</sup> for that rejoicing suffices to stain the soul and the senses with impurity by means of the knowledge of evil;<sup>5</sup> for, as the Wise Man says, the Holy Spirit will remove Himself from thoughts that are without understanding—that is, without the higher reason that has respect to God.<sup>6</sup>

5. Another benefit of a general kind follows, which is that, besides freeing ourselves from the evils and dangers aforementioned, we are delivered also from countless vanities, and from many other evils, both spiritual and temporal; and especially from falling into the small esteem in which are held all those that are seen to glory or rejoice in the said natural gifts, whether in their own or in those of others. And thus these souls are held and esteemed as wise and prudent, as indeed are all those who take no account of these things, but only of that which pleases God.

6. From these said benefits follows the last, which is a generosity of the soul, as necessary to the service of God as is liberty of spirit, whereby temptations are easily vanquished and trials faithfully endured, and whereby, too, the virtues<sup>7</sup> grow and become prosperous.

<sup>1</sup> So Alc. A, B: 'incantations.' E.p.: 'charms.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm ivii, 5 [A.V., lviii, 4-5].

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'if the heart allows itself to be to any extent carried away by rejoicing in natural graces and good things.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'or to have remembrance of such.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. concludes this paragraph here, but the 1630 edition continues, as do the Codices, which we here follow.

<sup>6</sup> Wisdom i, 5.

<sup>7</sup> A, B: 'the virtues of the soul.'

## CHAPTER XXIV

*Which treats of the third kind of good thing whereon the will may set the affection of rejoicing, which kind pertains to sense. Indicates what these good things are and of how many kinds, and how the will has to be directed to God and purged of this rejoicing.*

WE have next to treat of rejoicing with respect to the good things of sense, which is the third kind of good thing wherein we said that the will may rejoice. And it is to be noted that by the good things of sense we here understand everything in this life that can be apprehended by the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste or touch, and by the interior fashioning of imaginary reflections, all of which things belong to the bodily senses, interior and exterior.

2. And, in order to darken the will and purge it of rejoicing with respect to these sensible objects, and direct it to God by means of them, it is necessary to assume one truth, which is that, as we have frequently said, the sense of the lower part of man, which is that whereof we are treating, is not, neither can be, capable of knowing or understanding God as God is. So that the eye cannot see Him, or aught that is like Him; neither can the ear hear His voice, or any sound that resembles it; neither can the sense of smell perceive a perfume so sweet as He; neither can the taste detect a savour so sublime and delectable; neither can the touch feel a movement so delicate and full of delight, nor aught like to it; neither can His form or any figure that represents Him enter into the thought or imagination. Even as says Isaias: 'Eye hath not seen Him, nor hath ear heard Him, neither hath it entered into the heart of man.'<sup>1</sup>

3. And here it must be noted that the senses may receive pleasure and delight, either from the spirit, by means of some communication that it receives from God interiorly, or from outward things communicated to them. And, as has been said, neither by way of the spirit nor by that of sense can the sensual part of the soul know God. For, since it has no capacity for attaining to such a point, it receives in the senses both that which is of the spirit and that which is of sense,<sup>2</sup> and receives them in no other way. Wherefore it would be at the least but

<sup>1</sup> Isaias lxiv, 4; 1 Corinthians ii, 9.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. reads: 'and that which is of the intellect.'

vanity to set the rejoicing of the will upon pleasure caused by any of these apprehensions, and it would be hindering the power of the will from occupying itself with God and from setting its rejoicing upon Him alone. This the soul cannot perfectly accomplish, save by purging itself and remaining in darkness as to rejoicing of this kind, as also with respect to other things.

4. I said advisedly that if the rejoicing of the will were to rest in any of these things it would be vanity. But, when it does not rest upon them, but, as soon as the will finds pleasure in that which it hears, sees and does, soars upward to rejoice in God—so that its pleasure acts as a motive and strengthens it to that end—this is very good. In such a case not only need the said motions not be shunned when they cause this devotion and prayer, but the soul may profit by them, and indeed should so profit, to the end that it may accomplish this holy exercise. For there are souls who are greatly moved by objects of sense to seek God. But much circumspection must be observed herein and the resulting effects must be considered; for oftentimes many spiritual persons indulge in the recreations of sense aforementioned under the pretext of offering prayer and devotion to God; and they do this in a way which must be described as recreation rather than prayer, and which gives more pleasure to themselves than to God. And, although<sup>1</sup> the intention that they have is toward God, the effect which they produce<sup>2</sup> is that of recreation of sense, wherein they find weakness and imperfection, rather than revival of the will and surrender thereof to God.

5. I wish, therefore, to propose a test whereby it may be seen when these delights of the senses aforementioned are profitable and when they are not. And it is that, whensoever a person hears music and other things, and sees pleasant things,<sup>3</sup> and is conscious of sweet perfumes, or tastes things that are delicious, or feels soft touches, if his thought and the affection of his will are at once centred upon God and if that thought of God gives him more pleasure than the movement of sense which causes it, and save for that he finds no pleasure in the said movement, this is a sign that he is receiving benefit therefrom, and that this thing of sense is a help to his spirit. In this way such things may be used, for then such things of sense subserve the end for which God created and gave them, which is that He should be the better loved and known because of them. And it must be known, furthermore, that one upon whom these things of sense cause the pure spiritual effect which

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'although it seems that.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'which they cause.'

<sup>3</sup> A, e.p.: 'hears music or other pleasant things.'

I describe has no desire for them, and makes hardly any account of them, though they cause him great pleasure when they are offered to him, because of the pleasure which, as I have said, they cause him in God. He is not, however, solicitous for them, and when they are offered to him, as I say, his will passes from them at once and he abandons it to God and sets it upon Him.

6. The reason why he cares little for these motives, although they help him on his journey to God, is that the spirit which is ready to go by every means and in every way to God is so completely nourished and prepared and satisfied by the Spirit of God that it lacks nothing and desires nothing; or, if it desires anything to that end, the desire at once passes and is forgotten, and the soul makes no account of it. But one that feels not this liberty of spirit in these things and pleasures of sense, but whose will rests in these pleasures and feeds upon them, is greatly harmed by them and should withdraw himself from the use of them. For, although his reason may desire to employ them to journey to God, yet, inasmuch as his desire finds pleasure in them which is according to sense, and their effect is ever dependent upon the pleasure which they give, he is certain to find hindrance in them rather than help, and harm rather than profit. And, when he sees that the desire<sup>1</sup> for such recreation reigns in him, he must mortify it; for, the stronger it becomes, the more imperfection he will have and the greater will be his weakness.

7. So whatever pleasure coming from sense presents itself to the spiritual person, and whether it come to him by chance or by design, he must make use of it only for God, lifting up to Him the rejoicing of his soul so that his rejoicing may be useful and profitable<sup>2</sup> and perfect; realizing that all rejoicing which implies not renunciation<sup>3</sup> and annihilation of every other kind of rejoicing, although it be with respect to something apparently very lofty, is vain and profits not, but is a hindrance towards the union of the will in God.

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'that the spirit.'

<sup>2</sup> Alc. alone has: 'and profitable.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'that is not in renunciation . . .']

## CHAPTER XXV

*Which treats of the evils that afflict the soul when it desires to set the rejoicing of its will upon the good things of sense.*

**I**N the first place, if the soul does not darken and quench the joy which may arise within it from the things of sense, and direct its rejoicing to God, all the general kinds of evil which we have described as arising from every other kind of rejoicing follow from this joy in the things of sense: such evils are darkness in the reason, lukewarmness, spiritual weariness, etc. But, to come to details, many are the evils, spiritual, bodily and sensual, into which the soul may fall through this rejoicing.

2. First of all, from joy in visible things, when the soul denies not itself therein in order to reach God, there may come to it, directly, vanity of spirit and distraction of the mind, unruly covetousness, immodesty, outward and inward unseemliness, impurity of thought, and envy.

3. From joy in hearing useless things there may directly arise distraction of the imagination, gossiping, envy, rash judgments and vacillating thoughts; and from these arise many other and pernicious evils.

4. From joy in sweet perfumes, there arise loathing of the poor, which is contrary to the teaching of Christ, dislike of serving others, unruliness of heart in humble things, and spiritual insensibility, at least to a degree proportionate with its desire for this joy.

5. From joy in the savour of meat and drink, there arise directly such gluttony and drunkenness, wrath, discord and want of charity with one's neighbours and with the poor, as had that Epulon,<sup>1</sup> who fared sumptuously every day, with Lazarus.<sup>2</sup> Hence arise bodily disorders, infirmities and evil motions, because the incentives to luxury become greater. Directly, too, there arises great spiritual torpor, and the desire for spiritual things is corrupted, so that the soul can derive no enjoyment or satisfaction from them nor can even speak of them. From this joy is likewise born distraction of the other senses and of the heart, and discontent with respect to many things.

6. From joy in the touch of soft things arise many more evils and more pernicious ones, which more quickly cause sense to overflow

<sup>1</sup> E.p. : 'as had that rich eater.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xvi, 19.

into spirit,<sup>1</sup> and quench all spiritual strength and vigour. Hence arises the abominable vice of effeminacy, or the incentives thereto, according to the proportion of joy of this kind which is experienced. Hence luxury increases, the mind becomes effeminate and timid, and the senses grow soft and delicate and are predisposed to sin and evil. Vain gladness and joy are infused into the heart; the tongue takes to itself licence and the eyes roam unrestrainedly; and the remaining senses are blunted and deadened, according to the measure<sup>2</sup> of this desire. The judgment is put to confusion, being nourished by spiritual folly and insipidity; moral cowardice and inconstancy increase; and, by the darkness of the soul and the weakness of the heart, fear is begotten even where no fear is. At times, again, this joy begets a spirit of confusion, and insensibility with respect to conscience and spirit; wherefore the reason is greatly enfeebled, and is affected in such a way that it can neither take nor give good counsel, and remains incapable of moral and spiritual blessings and becomes as useless as a broken vessel.

7. All these evils are caused by this kind of rejoicing—in some more intensely,<sup>3</sup> according to the intensity of their rejoicing, and also according to the complacency or weakness or variableness of the person who yields to it. For there are natures that will receive more detriment from a slight occasion of sin than will others from a great one.

8. Finally, from joy of this kind in touch, a person may fall into as many evils and perils as those which we have described as concerning the good things of nature; and, since these have already been described, I do not detail them here; neither do I describe many other evils wrought thus, such as a falling-off in spiritual exercises and bodily penance and lukewarmness and lack of devotion in the use of the sacraments of penance and of the Eucharist.

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'which more quickly hurt the spirit.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to the quantity.'] E.p.: 'to the degree.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'in some more, in others less, more or less intensely . . .'

## CHAPTER XXVI

*Of the benefits that come to the soul from self-denial in rejoicing as to things of sense, which benefits are spiritual and temporal.*

**M**ARVELLOUS are the benefits that the soul derives from self-denial in this rejoicing: some of these are spiritual and some temporal.

2. The first is that the soul, by restraining its rejoicing as to things of sense, is restored from the distraction into which it has fallen through excessive use of the senses, and is recollected in God. The spirituality and the virtues that it has acquired are preserved; nay, they are increased and increase continually.<sup>1</sup>

3. The second spiritual benefit which comes from self-denial in rejoicing as to things of sense is exceeding great. We may say with truth that that which was sensual becomes spiritual, and that which was animal becomes rational; and even that the soul is journeying from a human life to a portion which is angelical; and that, instead of being temporal and human, it becomes celestial and divine. For, even as a man who seeks the pleasure of things of sense and sets his rejoicing upon them neither merits nor deserves any other name than those which we have given him—that is, sensual, animal, temporal, etc.—even so, when he exalts his rejoicing above these things of sense, he merits all those other names—to wit, spiritual, celestial, etc.

4. And it is clear that this is true; for, although the use of the senses and the power of sensuality are contrary, as the Apostle says, to the power and the exercises of spirituality,<sup>2</sup> it follows that, when the one kind of power is diminished and brought to an end, the other contrary kinds, the growth of which was hindered by the first kinds, are increased. And thus, when the spirit is perfected (which is the higher part of the soul and the part that has relations with God and receives His communications), it merits all these attributes aforementioned, since it is perfected in the heavenly and spiritual gifts and blessings of God. Both these things are proved by Saint Paul, who calls the sensual man (namely, the man that directs the exercise of his will solely to sense) the animal man, who perceives not<sup>3</sup> the things of God. But this

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and gain continually.'] So Alc. A, B add 'anew.' E.p. omits: 'and increase continually.'

<sup>2</sup> Galatians v, 17.

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'who is he that perceives not . . .'

other man, who lifts up his will to God, he calls the spiritual man, saying that this man penetrates and judges all things, even the deep things of God.<sup>1</sup> Therefore the soul gains herein the marvellous<sup>2</sup> benefit of a disposition well able to receive the blessings and spiritual gifts of God.

5. The third benefit is that the pleasures and the rejoicing of the will in temporal matters are very greatly increased; for, as the Saviour says, they shall receive an hundredfold in this life.<sup>3</sup> So that, if thou deniest thyself one joy, the Lord will give thee an hundredfold in this life, both spiritually and temporally; and likewise, for one joy that thou hast in these things of sense, thou shalt have an hundredfold of affliction and misery. For, through the eye that is purged from the joys of sight, there comes to the soul a spiritual joy, directed to God in all things that are seen, whether Divine or profane.<sup>4</sup> Through the ear that is purged from the joy of hearing, there comes to the soul joy most spiritual an hundredfold, directed to God in all that it hears, whether Divine or profane.<sup>5</sup> Even so is it with the other senses when they are purged. For, even as in the state of innocence all that our first parents saw and said and ate in Paradise furnished them with greater sweetness of contemplation, so that the sensual part of their nature might be duly subjected to, and ordered by, reason; even so the man whose senses are purged from all things of sense and made subject to the spirit receives, in their very first motion, the delight of delectable knowledge and contemplation of God.

6. Wherefore, to him that is pure, all things, whether high or low, are an occasion of greater good and further purity; even as the man that is impure is apt to derive evil from things both high and low, because of his impurity. But he that conquers not the joy of desire will not enjoy the serenity of habitual rejoicing in God through His creatures and works. In the man that lives no more according to sense, all the operations of the senses and faculties are directed to Divine contemplation. For, as it is true in good philosophy that each thing operates according to its being, and to the life that it lives, so it is clear, beyond contradiction, that, if the soul lives a spiritual life, the animal life<sup>6</sup> being mortified, it must be journeying straight to God,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 9, 10, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Here P. Juan Evangelista's copy recommences (cf. p. 261, n. 7, above).

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew xix, 29.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'or human.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'or human.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: '... that according to the being which everything has is the life that it lives, therefore, in a soul [*ġż.*, 'in him'] that has a spiritual being, the animal life . . .'

since all its spiritual actions and motions pertain to the life of the spirit. Hence it follows that such a man, being pure in heart, finds in all things a knowledge of God which is joyful and pleasant, chaste, pure, spiritual, glad and loving.

7. From what has been said I deduce the following doctrine—namely that, until a man has succeeded in so habituating his senses to the purgation of the joys of sense that from their first motion<sup>1</sup> he is gaining the benefit aforementioned of directing all his powers to God, he must needs deny himself joy and pleasure with respect to these powers, so that he may withdraw his soul from the life of sense. He must fear that since he is not yet spiritual, he may perchance derive from the practice of these things a pleasure and an energy which is of sense rather than of spirit; that the energy which is of sense may predominate in all his actions; and that this may lead to an increase of sensuality and may sustain and nurture it. For, as Our Saviour says, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.<sup>2</sup> Let this be closely considered, for it is the truth. And let not him that has not yet mortified his pleasure in things of sense dare to make great use of the power and operation of sense with respect to them, thinking that they will help him to become more spiritual; for the powers of the soul will increase the more without the intervention of these things of sense—that is, if it quench the joy and desire for them rather than indulge its pleasure in them.

8. There is no need to speak of the blessings of glory that, in the life to come, result from the renunciation of these joys. For, apart from the fact that the bodily gifts of the life of glory, such as agility and clarity, will be much more excellent than in those souls who have not denied themselves, there will be an increase in the essential glory of the soul corresponding to its love of God, for Whose sake it has renounced the things of sense aforementioned. For every momentary, fleeting joy that has been renounced, as Saint Paul says, there shall be laid up an exceeding weight of glory eternally.<sup>3</sup> And I will not here recount the other benefits, whether moral, temporal or spiritual, which result from this night of rejoicing; for they all are those that have already been described, and to a more eminent degree; since these joys that are renounced are more closely linked to the natural man, and therefore he that renounces them acquires thereby a more intimate purity.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'from their first motion.'

<sup>2</sup> St. John iii, 6.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Corinthians iv, 17.

## CHAPTER XXVII

*Which begins to treat of the fourth kind of good—namely, the moral. Describes wherein this consists, and in what manner joy of the will therein is lawful.*

THE fourth kind of good wherein the will may rejoice is moral. By this we here understand the virtues, and the habits of the virtues, in so far as these are moral, and the practice of any virtue, and the practice of works of mercy, the keeping of the law of God, and of that of the commonweal,<sup>1</sup> and the putting into practice of all good intentions and inclinations.

2. These kinds of moral good, when they are possessed and practised, deserve perhaps more than any of the other kinds aforementioned that the will should rejoice in them. For a man may rejoice in his own affairs for one of two reasons, or for both reasons together—namely, for that which they are in themselves, or for the good which they imply and bring with them as a means and instrument. We shall find that the possession of the three kinds of good already mentioned merits no rejoicing of the will. For of themselves, as has been said, they do no good to man, nor in themselves have they any good, since they are so fleeting and frail; rather, as we have likewise said, they cause and bring him trouble and grief and affliction of spirit. Now, although they might merit that man should rejoice in them for the second reason—which is that he may profit by them for journeying to God—this is so uncertain that, as we commonly see, they more often harm man than bring him profit. But good things of a moral kind merit a certain degree of rejoicing in him that possesses them, and this for the first reason—namely, for their intrinsic nature and worth. For they bring with them peace and tranquillity, and a right and ordered use of the reason and actions that are consistent therewith, so that a man cannot, humanly speaking, have anything better in this life.

3. Thus, since these virtues deserve to be loved and esteemed, humanly speaking, for their own sakes, a man may well rejoice in the possession of them, and may practise them for that which they are in themselves, and for the blessing which they bring to man in human

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, *política*, the 'political' virtue of Aristotle and St. Thomas—i.e., the 'social,' as opposed to the 'moral,' 'intellectual' and 'theological' virtues. P. Silverio glosses the word as meaning 'good government in the commonweal, courtesy and other social virtues.'] A, B read *plática* ['conversation'], thereby entirely altering the sense.

and temporal form. In this way and for this reason<sup>1</sup> philosophers and wise men and princes of old esteemed and praised them, and endeavoured to possess and practise them; and, although they were heathen, and regarded them only in a temporal manner, merely considering the blessings which they knew would result from them—temporal, corporeal and natural—they not only obtained by means of them the temporal renown and benefits which they sought, but, apart from this, God, Who loves all that is good (even in barbarians and heathen) and, as the Wise Man says, hinders the doing of naught that is good,<sup>2</sup> gave them longer life, greater honour, dominion and peace (as He did for example to the Romans), because they made just laws; for He subjected nearly the whole world to them, and gave rewards of a temporal kind for their good customs to those who because of their unbelief were incapable of eternal reward. For God loves moral good so much that, merely because Solomon asked wisdom of Him that he might teach his people, govern them justly and bring them up in good customs, God Himself was greatly pleased with him, and told him that, because he had asked for wisdom to that end, this should be given him, and there should also be given him that which he had not asked, namely, riches and honour, so that no king, either in the past or in the future, should be like him.<sup>3</sup>

4. But, although the Christian should rejoice in this first way in the moral good that he possesses and in the good works of a temporal kind which he does, since they lead to the temporal blessings which we have described, he must not allow his joy to stop at this first stage (as we have said the heathen did, because their spiritual sight extended not beyond the things of this mortal life); but, since he has the light of faith, wherein he hopes for eternal life, without which nothing that belongs to this life and the next will be of any value to him, he must rejoice principally and solely in the possession and employment of this moral good after the second manner—namely, in that by doing these works for the love of God he will gain eternal life. And thus he should set his eyes and his rejoicing solely on serving and honouring God with his good customs and virtues. For without this intention the virtues are of no worth in the sight of God, as is seen in the ten virgins of the Gospel, who had all kept their virginity and done good works; and yet, because the joy of five of them was not of the second kind (that is, because they had not directed their joy to God), but was rather

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'and for this reason.'

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom vii, 22.

<sup>3</sup> 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] iii, 11-13.

after the first and vain kind, for they rejoiced<sup>1</sup> in the possession of their good works, they were cast out<sup>2</sup> from Heaven with no acknowledgement or reward from the Bridegroom. And likewise many persons of old had many virtues<sup>3</sup> and practised good works, and many Christians have them<sup>4</sup> nowadays and accomplish great acts, which will profit them nothing for eternal life, because they have not sought in them the glory and honour which belong to God alone.<sup>5</sup> The Christian, then, must rejoice, not in the performing of good works and the following of good customs, but in doing them for the love of God alone, without respect to aught else soever. For, inasmuch as good works that are done to serve God alone will have the greater reward in glory, the greater will be the confusion in the presence of God of those who have done them for other reasons.

5. The Christian, then, if he will direct his rejoicing to God with regard to moral good, must realize that the value of his good works, fasts, alms, penances, etc., is based, not upon the number or the quality of them, but upon the love of God which inspires him to do them; and that they are the more excellent when they are performed with a purer and sincerer love of God, and when there is less in them of self-interest, joy, pleasure, consolation and praise, whether with reference to this world or to the next. Wherefore the heart must not be set upon pleasure, consolation and delight, and the other interests which good works and practices commonly bring with them, but it must concentrate its rejoicing upon God. It must desire to serve Him in its good works, and purge itself from this other rejoicing, remaining in darkness with respect to it and desiring that God alone shall have joy in its good works and shall take secret pleasure therein, without any other intention and delight than those relating to the honour and glory of God. And thus, with respect to this moral good, the soul will concentrate all the strength of its will upon God.

<sup>1</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'and boasted.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'certain virtues.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'have and practise them.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. adds: 'and His love above all things.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'were dismissed.'

## CHAPTER XXVIII

*Of seven evils into which a man may fall if he set the rejoicing of his will upon moral good.*

THE principal evils into which a man may fall through vain rejoicing in his good works and habits I find to be seven; and they are very hurtful because they are spiritual.<sup>1</sup>

2. The first evil is vanity, pride, vainglory and presumption; for a man cannot rejoice in his works without esteeming them. And hence arise boasting and like things, as is said of the Pharisee in the Gospel, who prayed and congratulated himself before God,<sup>2</sup> boasting that he fasted and did other good works.

3. The second evil is usually linked with this: it is our judging others, by comparison with ourselves, as wicked and imperfect, when it seems to us that their acts and good works are inferior to our own; we esteem them the less highly in our hearts, and at times also in our speech. This evil was likewise that of the Pharisee, for in his prayer he said: 'I thank Thee that<sup>3</sup> I am not as other men are: robbers, unjust and adulterers.'<sup>4</sup> So that by one single act he fell into these two evils, esteeming himself and despising others, as do many nowadays, saying: I am not like such a man, nor do I do this and that, as does such or such a man. And many of these are even worse than the Pharisee. He, it is true, not only despised others, but also pointed to an individual, saying: 'Nor am I like this publican.' But they, not satisfied with either of these things, go so far as to be angry and envious when they see that others are praised, or do more, or are of greater use, than themselves.

4. The third evil is that, as they look for pleasure in their good works, they usually perform them only when they see that some pleasure and praise will result from them. And thus, as Christ says, they do everything *ut videantur ab hominibus*,<sup>5</sup> and work not for the love of<sup>6</sup> God alone.

5. The fourth evil follows from this. It is that they will have no reward from God, since they have desired in this life to have joy or consolation or honour or some other kind of interest as a result of their good works: of such the Saviour says that herein they have

<sup>1</sup> A, B, e.p. add: 'These I shall here briefly describe.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xviii, 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke xviii, 11.

<sup>4</sup> A, B, e.p. omit: 'the love of.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'I thank Thee that.'

<sup>6</sup> St. Matthew xxiii, 5.

received their reward.<sup>1</sup> And thus they have had<sup>2</sup> naught but the labour of their work and are confounded, and receive no reward. There is so much misery among the sons of men which has to do with this evil that I myself believe that the greater number of good works which they perform in public are either vicious or will be of no value to them, or are imperfect<sup>3</sup> in the sight of God, because they are not detached from these human intentions and interests. For what other judgment can be formed of some of the actions which certain men perform, and of the memorials which they set up, when they will not perform these actions at all unless they are surrounded by human respect and honour, which are the vanity of life, or unless they can perpetuate in these memorials their name, lineage or authority, even setting up their emblems<sup>4</sup> and escutcheons in the very churches, as if they wished to set themselves, in the stead of images, in places where all bend the knee? In these good works which some men perform, may it not be said that they are worshipping<sup>5</sup> themselves more than God? This is certainly true if they perform them for the reason described and otherwise would not perform them at all.<sup>6</sup> But leaving aside these, which are the worst cases, how many are there who fall into these evils in their good works in many ways? Some wish to be praised, others to be thanked, others enumerate their good works and desire that this person and that shall know of them, and indeed the whole world; and sometimes they wish an intermediary to present their alms, or to perform other of their charitable deeds,<sup>7</sup> so that more may be known of them; and some desire all these things. This is the sounding of the trumpet, which, says the Saviour in the Gospel, vain men do, for which reason they shall have no reward for their works from God.<sup>8</sup>

6. In order to flee from this evil, such persons must hide their good works so that God alone may see them, and must not desire anyone to take notice of them. And they must hide them, not only from others, but even from themselves. That is to say, they must find no satisfaction in them, nor esteem them as if they were of some worth, nor derive pleasure from them at all. It is this that is spiritually indicated in those words of Our Lord: 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.'<sup>9</sup> Which is as much as to say: Esteem not with thy carnal and temporal eye the work that thou doest spiritually. And in this way the

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew vi, 2.

<sup>3</sup> A, e.p.: 'or are imperfect and defective.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'are adoring.'] E.p.: 'are esteeming.'

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to present their alms or that which they do.']

<sup>8</sup> St. Matthew vi, 2.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'And thus they will have.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B: 'their names.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits this entire sentence.

<sup>9</sup> St. Matthew vi, 3.

strength of the will is concentrated upon God, and a good deed bears fruit in His sight; so that not only will it not be lost, but it will be of great merit.<sup>1</sup> And in this sense must be understood that passage from Job: 'If I have kissed my hand with my mouth, which is a great sin and iniquity, and my heart hath rejoiced in secret.'<sup>2</sup> Here by the hand is understood good works, and by the mouth is understood the will which finds satisfaction in them. And since this is, as we say, finding satisfaction in oneself, he says: If my heart hath rejoiced in secret, which is a great iniquity against God and a denial of Him. And this is as though he were to say that he had no satisfaction, neither did his heart rejoice in secret.<sup>3</sup>

7. The fifth of these evils is that such persons make no progress on the road of perfection. For, since they are attached to the pleasure and consolation which they find in their good works, it follows that, when they find no such pleasure and consolation in their good works and exercises, which ordinarily happens when God desires to lead them on, by giving them the dry bread of the perfect and taking from them the milk of babes, in order to prove their strength and to purge their delicate appetites so that they may be able to enjoy the food of grown men, they commonly faint and cease to persevere, because their good works give them no pleasure. In this way may be spiritually understood these words of the Wise Man: 'Dying flies spoil the sweetness of ointment.'<sup>4</sup> For, when any mortification comes to these persons, they die to their good works and cease to practise them; and thus they lose their perseverance, wherein are found sweetness of spirit and interior consolation.

8. The sixth of these evils is that such persons commonly deceive themselves, thinking that the things and good works which give them pleasure must be better than those that give them none. They praise and esteem the one kind and depreciate the other;<sup>5</sup> yet as a rule those works whereby a man is most greatly mortified (especially when he is not proficient in perfection) are more acceptable and precious in the

<sup>1</sup> So Alc. A, B, e.p. read: 'where [*sic*. Read: 'where otherwise'] not only will it be lost, but oftentimes, through inward vanity and boasting, the soul will sin greatly before God.'

<sup>2</sup> Job xxxi, 27-8.

<sup>3</sup> So Alc. A, B and (with slight variations) e.p. add: 'For to assign and attribute good works to oneself is to deny them to God, to Whom belongs every good work; this Lucifer did, rejoicing in himself and denying to God that which was His, and exalting himself because of it, which was the cause of his perdition.'

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes x, 1.

<sup>5</sup> So Alc. A, B: 'and reprehend and despise the other.' E.p.: 'and condemn and despise the other.'

sight of God, by reason of the self-denial which a man must observe in performing them, than are those wherein he finds consolation and which may very easily be an occasion of self-seeking. And in this connection Micheas says of them: *Malum manuum suarum dicunt bonum*.<sup>1</sup> That is: That which is bad in their works they call good. This comes to them because of the pleasure which they take in their good works, instead of thinking only of giving pleasure to God. The extent to which this evil predominates, whether in spiritual men or in ordinary persons, would take too long to describe, for hardly anyone can be found who is moved to do such works simply for God's sake, without the attraction of some advantage of consolation or pleasure, or some other consideration.

9. The seventh evil is that, in so far as a man stifles not vain rejoicing in moral works, he is to that extent incapable of receiving reasonable counsel and instruction with regard to good works that he should perform. For he is fettered by the habit of weakness that he has acquired through performing good works with attachment to vain rejoicing; so that he cannot consider the counsel of others as best, or, even if he considers it to be so, he cannot follow it, through not having the necessary strength of mind. Such persons as this are greatly weakened in charity toward God and their neighbour; for the self-love with respect to their good works in which they indulge causes their charity to grow cold.

## CHAPTER XXIX

*Of the benefits which come to the soul through the withdrawal of its rejoicing from moral good.*

VERY great are the benefits which come to the soul when it desires not to set the vain rejoicing of its will on this kind of good. For, in the first place, it is freed from falling into many temptations and deceits of the devil, which are involved in rejoicing in these good works, as we may understand by that which is said in Job, namely: 'He sleepeth under the shadow, in the covert of the reed<sup>2</sup> and in moist places.'<sup>3</sup> This he applies to the devil, who deceives the soul in the moisture of rejoicing and in the vanity of the reed—that is,

<sup>1</sup> Micheas vii, 3.

<sup>2</sup> This is the emendation of e.p. The Codices [followed by P. Silverio] have: 'of the feather,' as also in the following sentence.

<sup>3</sup> Job xl, 16 [A.V., xl, 21].

in vain works. And it is no wonder if the soul is secretly deceived by the devil in this rejoicing; for, apart altogether from his suggestions, vain rejoicing is itself deception. This is especially true when there is any boasting of heart concerning these good works, as Jeremias well says in these words: *Arrogantia tua decepit te.*<sup>1</sup> For what greater deception is there than boasting? And from this the soul that purges itself from this rejoicing is freed.

2. The second benefit is that the soul performs its good works with greater deliberation and perfection than it can if there be in them the passion of joy and pleasure. For, because of this passion of joy, the passions of wrath and concupiscence are so strong that they will not submit to reason,<sup>2</sup> but ordinarily cause a man to be inconsistent in his actions and purposes, so that he abandons some and takes up others, and begins a thing only to abandon it without completing any part of it. For, since he acts under the influence of pleasure, and since pleasure is variable, being much stronger in some natures than in others, it follows that, when this pleasure ceases, both the action and its purpose cease, important though they may be. To such persons the joy which they have in their work is the soul and the strength thereof; and, when the joy is quenched,<sup>3</sup> the work ceases and perishes, and they persevere therein no longer. It is of such persons that Christ says: 'They receive the word with joy, and then the devil taketh it away from them, lest they should persevere.'<sup>4</sup> And this is because they have no strength and no roots save in the joy aforementioned. To take and to withdraw their will, therefore, from this rejoicing is the cause of their perseverance and success.<sup>5</sup> This benefit, then, is a great one, even as the contrary evil is great likewise. The wise man sets his eyes upon the substance and benefit of his work, not upon the pleasure and delight which it gives him; and so he is not beating the air, but derives from his work a stable joy, without any meed of bitterness.<sup>6</sup>

3. The third benefit is divine. It is that, when vain joy in these good works is quenched, the soul becomes poor in spirit, which is one of the blessings spoken of by the Son of God when He says: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.'<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jeremias xlix, 16. E.p. adds the translation: 'Thy arrogance hath deceived thee.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'will not give place to the weight of reason.']

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'when the joy ceases.'

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke viii, 12.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: '... is an excellent preparation for perseverance and success.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'without demanding any meed of pleasure.' [The word translated 'bitterness' in the text is *sinsabor*, the contrary of *sabor*, which is translated above 'pleasure.' The chief idea beneath *sinsabor* is that of insipidity and boredom.]

<sup>7</sup> St. Matthew v, 3.

4. The fourth benefit is that he that denies himself this joy will be meek, humble and prudent in his actions. For he will not act impetuously and rapidly, through being impelled<sup>1</sup> by the wrath and concupiscence which belong to joy; neither presumptuously, through being affected by the esteem of his own work which he cherishes because of the joy that he has in it; neither incautiously, through being blinded by joy.<sup>2</sup>

5. The fifth benefit is that he becomes pleasing to God and man, and is freed from spiritual sloth, gluttony and avarice, and from spiritual envy and from a thousand other vices.

## CHAPTER XXX

*Which begins to treat of the fifth kind of good wherein the will may rejoice, which is the supernatural. Describes the nature of these supernatural good things, and how they are distinguished from the spiritual, and how joy in them is to be directed to God.*

IT now behoves us to treat of the fifth kind of good thing wherein the soul may rejoice, which is the supernatural. By this term we here understand all the gifts and graces given by God which transcend natural virtue and capacity and are called *gratis datae*. Such as these are the gifts of wisdom and knowledge which God gave to Solomon, and the graces whereof Saint Paul speaks<sup>3</sup>—namely, faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, knowledge and discernment of spirits, interpretation of words and likewise the gift of tongues.

2. These good things, it is true, are also spiritual, like those of the same kind of which we have to speak presently; yet, since the two are so different, I have thought well to make a distinction between them. The practice of these has an intimate relation with the profit of man, and it is with a view to this profit and to this end that God gives them. As Saint Paul says: 'The spirit is given to none save for the profit of the rest';<sup>4</sup> this is to be understood of these graces. But the use and practice of spiritual graces has to do with the soul and God alone, and with God and the soul, in the communion of understanding and will, etc., as we shall say hereafter. And thus there is a difference in their object, since

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'being carried away.'

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians xii, 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Alc. omits: 'neither . . . by joy.'

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians xii, 7.

spiritual graces have to do only with the Creator and the soul;<sup>1</sup> whereas supernatural graces have to do with the creature, and furthermore differ<sup>2</sup> in substance, and therefore in their operation, and thus of necessity the instruction which we give concerning them differs also.

3. Speaking now of supernatural graces and gifts as we here understand them, I say that, in order to purge ourselves of vain joy in them, it is well here to notice two benefits which are comprised in this kind of gift—namely, temporal and spiritual. The temporal benefits are the healing of infirmities, the receiving of their sight by the blind, the raising of the dead, the casting out of devils, prophesying concerning the future so that men may take heed to themselves, and other things of the kind. The spiritual and eternal benefit is that God is known and served through these good works by him that performs them, or by those in whom and in whose presence they are performed.

4. With respect to the first kind of benefit—namely, the temporal—supernatural works and miracles merit little or no rejoicing on the part of the soul; for, without the second kind of benefit, they are of little or no importance to man, since they are not in themselves a means for uniting the soul with God, as charity is. And these supernatural works and graces may be performed by those who are not in a state of grace and charity, whether they truly give thanks and attribute their gifts to God,<sup>3</sup> as did the wicked prophet Balaam, and Solomon, or whether they perform them falsely, through the agency of the devil, as did Simon Magus, or by means of other secrets of nature. These works and marvels, if any of them were to be of any profit to him that worked them, would be true works given by God. And Saint Paul teaches us what these are worth<sup>4</sup> without the second kind of benefit, saying: 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding bell or metal. And though I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, even as much as may remove<sup>5</sup> mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing, etc.'<sup>6</sup> Wherefore Christ will refuse the requests of many who have esteemed their good works in this way, when they beg Him for glory because of them, saying<sup>7</sup>: Lord, have

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'spiritual graces are between God and the soul.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'but the other supernatural graces of which we were speaking have relation to other creatures and are for their profit. And furthermore they differ.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'give thanks and gifts to God.']

<sup>4</sup> A, B omit 'worth.'

<sup>5</sup> [*traspasar*: *lit.*, 'go over,' 'go through.']

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> A, B: 'and say to Him.' The other authorities omit 'saying.'

we not prophesied in Thy name and worked many miracles? Then Christ will say to them: 'Depart from Me, workers of iniquity.'<sup>1</sup>

5. A man, then, should rejoice, not when he has such graces and makes use of them, but when he reaps from them the second spiritual fruit, namely that of serving God in them with true charity, for herein is the fruit of eternal life. For this cause Our Saviour reproved the disciples who were rejoicing because they cast out devils, saying: 'Desire not to rejoice in this, that devils are subject to you, but rather because your names are written in the book of life.'<sup>2</sup> This, according to good theology, is as much as to say: Rejoice if your names are written in the book of life. By this it is understood that a man should not rejoice save when he is walking in the way of life, which he may do by performing good works in charity; for where is the profit and what is the worth in the sight of God of aught that is not love of God? And this love is not perfect if it be not strong and discreet in purging the will of joy in all things, and if it be not set upon doing the will of God alone. And in this manner the will is united with God through these good things which are supernatural.

## CHAPTER XXXI

*Of the evils which come to the soul when it sets the rejoicing of the will upon this kind of good.*

THREE principal evils, it seems to me, may come to the soul when it sets its rejoicing<sup>3</sup> upon supernatural good. These are: that it may deceive and be deceived; that it may fall away from the faith; and that it may indulge in vainglory or some other such vanity.

2. As to the first of these, it is a very easy thing to deceive others, and to deceive oneself, by rejoicing in this kind of operation. And the reason is that, in order to know which of these operations are false and which are true, and how and at what time they should be practised, much counsel and much light from God are needful, both of which are greatly impeded by joy in these operations and esteem for them. And this for two reasons: first, because joy blunts and obscures the judgment; second, because, when a man has joy in these things, not only does he the more quickly become eager for them, but he is also

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew vii, 22-3.

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke x, 20.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'may come to man when he sets his rejoicing.'

the more impelled<sup>1</sup> to practise them out of the proper season. And even supposing the virtues and operations which are practised to be genuine, these two defects suffice for us to be frequently deceived in them, either through not understanding them as they should be understood, or through not profiting by them and not using them at the times and in the ways that are most meet. For, although it is true that, when God gives these gifts and graces, He gives light by which to see them, and the impulse whereby a man may know at what times and in what ways to use them; yet these souls, through the attachment and imperfection which they may have with regard to them, may greatly err, by not using them with the perfection that God desires of them therein, and in the way and at the time that He wills. We read that Balaam desired to do this, when, against the will of God, he determined to go<sup>2</sup> and curse the people of Israel, for which reason God was wroth and purposed to slay him.<sup>3</sup> And Saint James and Saint John<sup>4</sup> desired to call down fire from Heaven upon the Samaritans because they gave not lodging to Our Saviour, and for this He reproved them.<sup>5</sup>

3. Here it is evident that these persons<sup>6</sup> were led to determine to perform these works, when it was not meet for them to do so, by a certain imperfect passion, which was inherent in their joy in them and esteem for them. For, when no such imperfection exists, the soul is moved and determined to perform these virtues only in the manner wherein God so moves it, and at His time, and until then it is not right that they should be performed. It was for this reason that God complained of certain prophets, through Jeremias, saying: 'I sent not the prophets, and they ran; I spake not to them, and they prophesied.'<sup>7</sup> And later He says: 'They deceived My people by their lying and their miracles, when I had not commanded them, neither had I sent them.'<sup>8</sup> And in that place He says of them likewise: 'They see the visions of their heart, and speak of them'<sup>9</sup>; which would not happen if they had not this abominable attachment to these works.

4. From these passages it is to be understood that the evil of this rejoicing not only leads men to make wicked and perverse use of these graces given by God, as did Balaam and those of whom the prophet here says that they worked miracles whereby they deceived the

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'the more inclined.'

<sup>3</sup> Numbers xxii, 22-3.

<sup>5</sup> St. Luke ix, 54-5.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'that these imperfect persons of whom we are speaking.'

<sup>7</sup> Jeremias xxiii, 21.

<sup>9</sup> Jeremias xxiii, 26.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'he dared to go.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds: 'carried away by zeal.'

<sup>8</sup> Jeremias xxiii, 32.

people, but it even leads them to use these graces without having been given them by God, like those who prophesied their own fancies and published the visions which they invented or which the devil represented to them. For, when the devil sees them affectioned to these things, he opens a wide field to them, gives them abundant material and interferes with them in many ways; whereupon they spread their sails and become shamelessly audacious in the freedom wherewith they work these marvels.

5. Nor does the evil stop here. To such a point does their joy in these works and their eagerness for them extend that, if before they had a secret compact with the devil (and many of them do in fact perform these works by such secret compacts), it now makes them bold enough to work with him by an explicit and manifest compact, submitting themselves to him, by agreement, as his disciples and allies. Hence we have wizards, enchanters, magicians, soothsayers and sorcerers. And so far does the joy of these persons in their works carry them that, not only do they seek to purchase gifts and graces with money, as did Simon Magus, in order to serve the devil, but they even strive to obtain sacred things, and (which cannot be said without trembling) Divine things,<sup>1</sup> for even the very Body<sup>2</sup> of our Lord Jesus Christ has been seen to be usurped for the use of their wicked deeds and abominations. May God here extend and show to them His great mercy!

6. Everyone will clearly understand how pernicious are such persons to themselves and how prejudicial to Christianity.<sup>3</sup> It may be noted here that all those magicians and soothsayers who lived among the children of Israel, whom Saul destroyed out of the land, because they desired to imitate the true prophets of God, had fallen into such abominations and deceits.

7. He, then, that has supernatural gifts and graces ought to refrain from desiring to practise them, and from rejoicing in so doing, nor ought he to care to exercise them;<sup>4</sup> for God, Who gives Himself to such persons, by supernatural means, for the profit of His Church and of its members, will move them likewise supernaturally<sup>5</sup> in such a manner and at such time as He desires. As He commanded His faithful ones<sup>6</sup> to take no thought as to what they were to say, or as to how they

<sup>1</sup> The remainder of this sentence is omitted from e.p.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the awful Body.']

<sup>3</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'to the Christian commonweal.'

<sup>4</sup> Thus Alc. and B. A: 'to name them.' E.p. omits: 'nor ought he to care to exercise them.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. adds: 'to exercise them.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'His disciples.'

were to say it, since this is the supernatural business of faith, it will likewise be His will (as these operations are no less a supernatural matter) that a man should wait and allow God to work by moving his heart, since it is in the virtue of this working that there will be wrought all virtue. The disciples (so we read in the Acts of the Apostles), although these graces and gifts had been infused within them, prayed to God, beseeching Him to be pleased to stretch forth His hand in making signs and performing works of healing through them, that they might introduce the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ into men's hearts.<sup>1</sup>

8. From this first evil may proceed the second, which is a falling away from the faith; this can come to pass after two manners. The first has respect to others; for, when a man sets out, unseasonably and needlessly, to perform a marvel or a mighty work, apart from the fact that this is tempting God, which is a great sin, it may be that he will not succeed, and will engender in the hearts of men discredit and contempt for the faith. For, although at times such persons may succeed because for other reasons and purposes God so wills it, as in the case of Saul's witch<sup>2</sup> (if it be true that it was indeed Samuel who appeared on that occasion), they will not always so succeed; and, when they do so, they go astray none the less and are blameworthy for having used these graces when it was not fitting. The second manner in which we may fall away is in ourselves<sup>3</sup> and has respect to the merit of faith; for, if a man make much account of these miracles, he ceases to lean upon the substantial practice of faith, which is an obscure habit; and thus, where signs and witnesses abound, there is less merit in believing. In this way Saint Gregory says that faith has no merit when human reason provides experience.<sup>4</sup> And thus these marvels are never worked by God save when they are really necessary for belief.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, to the end that His disciples should not be without merit, though they had experience of His resurrection, He did many things before He showed Himself to them, so that they should believe Him without seeing Him. To Mary Magdalene, first of all, He showed the empty tomb, and afterwards bade the angels speak to her<sup>6</sup> (for, as Saint Paul says, faith comes by hearing);<sup>7</sup> so that, having heard, she should

<sup>1</sup> Acts iv, 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings [A.V., 1 Samuel] xxviii, 7, ff.

<sup>3</sup> Alc. has 'in like manner' [*asimismo*] for 'in ourselves' [*en si mismo*].

<sup>4</sup> 'Nec fides habet meritum cui humana ratio præbet experimentum.' St. Gregory, Hom. 26 in Evang. (Migne, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 1,137). The translation in the text is that of Alc. A, B, e.p. have: '... when reason provides experience of a human and palpable kind'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. adds: 'and for other ends concerning His glory and His saints.'

<sup>6</sup> [St. Luke xxiv, 6; St. John xx, 2.]

<sup>7</sup> [Romans x, 17.]

believe before she saw. And, although she saw Him, it was as an ordinary man,<sup>1</sup> that, by the warmth of His presence, He might completely instruct her in the belief which she lacked. And He first sent to tell His disciples, with the women, and afterwards they went to see the tomb. And, as to those who went to Emmaus, He first of all enkindled their hearts in faith so that they might see Him, dissembling with them as He walked.<sup>2</sup> And finally He reproved them all because they had not believed those who had announced to them His resurrection.<sup>3</sup> And He reproved Saint Thomas because he desired to have the witness of His wounds, by telling him that they who saw Him not and yet believed Him were blessed.<sup>4</sup>

9. And thus it is not the will of God that miracles should be wrought: when He works them, He does so, as it were, because He cannot do otherwise.<sup>5</sup> And for this cause He reproved the Pharisees because they believed not save through signs, saying: 'Unless ye see marvels and signs, ye believe not.'<sup>6</sup> Those, then, who love to rejoice in these supernatural works lose much in the matter of faith.

10. The third evil is that, because of their joy in these works, men commonly fall into vainglory or some other vanity. For even their joy in these wonders, when it is not, as we have said, purely in God and for God, is vanity; which is evident in the reproof given by Our Lord to the disciples because they had rejoiced that devils were subject to them;<sup>7</sup> for which joy, if it had not been vain, He would not have reproved them.

## CHAPTER XXXII

*Of two benefits which are derived from the renunciation of rejoicing in the matter of the supernatural graces.*

**B**ESIDES the benefits which the soul gains by being delivered from the three evils aforementioned through its renunciation of this joy, it acquires two excellent benefits. The first is that it magnifies and exalts God: the second is that it exalts itself. For God is exalted

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'as a gardener' [St. John xx, 15].

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xxiv, 15.

<sup>3</sup> [St. Luke xxiv, 25-6.]

<sup>4</sup> St. John xx, 29.

<sup>5</sup> [The phrase translated 'as it were' is *como dicen*, 'as they say,' and is explained by the fact that a *más no poder*, here rendered 'because He cannot do otherwise,' is an idiomatic expression, probably less common then than it is now.] E.p. omits: 'when He . . . do otherwise.'

<sup>6</sup> St. John iv, 48.

<sup>7</sup> St. Luke x, 20.

in the soul after two manners: first, by the withdrawal of the heart and the joy of the will from all that is not God, in order that they may be set upon Him alone. This David signified in the verse<sup>1</sup> which we quoted when we began to speak of the night of this faculty; namely: 'Man shall attain to a lofty heart, and God shall be exalted.'<sup>2</sup> For, when the heart is raised above all things, the soul is exalted above them all.

2. And, because in this way the soul centres itself in God alone, God is exalted and magnified, when He reveals to the soul His excellence and greatness; for, in this elevation of joy, God bears witness of Who He Himself is. This cannot be done save if the will be voided of joy and consolation with respect to all things, even as David said also, in these words: 'Be still and see that I am God.'<sup>3</sup> And again he says: 'In a desert land, dry and pathless, have I appeared before Thee, to see Thy power and Thy glory.'<sup>4</sup> And, since it is true that God is exalted by the fixing of the soul's rejoicing upon detachment from all things, He is much more highly exalted when the soul withdraws itself from the most wondrous of these things in order to fix its rejoicing on Him alone. For these, being supernatural, are of a nobler kind; and thus for the soul to cast them aside, in order to set its rejoicing upon God alone, is for it to attribute greater glory and excellence to God than to them. For, the more and the greater things a man despises for the sake of another, the more does he esteem and exalt that other.

3. Furthermore, God is exalted after the second manner when the will is withdrawn from this kind of operation; for, the more God is believed and served without testimonies and signs, the more He is exalted by the soul, for it believes more concerning God than signs and miracles can demonstrate.

4. The second benefit wherein the soul is exalted consists in this, that, withdrawing the will from all desire for apparent<sup>5</sup> signs and testimonies, it is exalted in purest faith, which God increases and infuses within it much more intensely. And, together with this, He increases in it the other two theological virtues, which are charity and hope, wherein the soul enjoys the highest Divine knowledge by means of the obscure and detached habit of faith; and it enjoys great delight of love by means of charity, whereby the will rejoices in naught else

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'in the place.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxiii, 7 [A.V., lxiv, 6-7].

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xlv, 11 [A.V., xlvi, 10].

<sup>4</sup> Psalm lxii, 3 [A.V., lxiii, 1-2].

<sup>5</sup> [i.e., that are perceived by the faculties of the soul in other ways than by pure faith.]

than in the living God; and likewise it enjoys satisfaction in the memory<sup>1</sup> by means of hope. All this is a wondrous benefit, which leads essentially and directly to the perfect union of the soul with God.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

*Which begins to treat of the sixth kind of good wherein the soul may rejoice. Describes its nature and makes the first division under this head.<sup>2</sup>*

SINCE the intention of this work of ours is to lead the spirit through these good things of the spirit even to the Divine union of the soul with God, it will now behove both myself and the reader to give our consideration to this matter with particular care. For, in speaking of this sixth kind of good, we have to treat of the good things of the spirit, which are those that are of the greatest service to this end. For it is quite certain, and quite an ordinary occurrence,<sup>3</sup> that some persons, because of their lack of knowledge, make use of spiritual things with respect only to sense, and leave the spirit empty. There will scarcely be anyone whose spirit is not to a considerable degree corrupted by sweetness of sense; since, if the water be drunk up before it reaches the spirit, the latter becomes dry and barren.

2. Coming to this matter, then, I say that by good things of the spirit I understand all those that influence and aid the soul in Divine things and in its intercourse with God, and the communications of God to the soul.

3. Beginning by making a division between these supreme kinds of good, I say that good things of the spirit are of two kinds: the one kind is delectable and the other painful. And each of these kinds is likewise of two manners; for the delectable kind consists of clear things that are distinctly understood, and also of things that are not understood clearly or distinctly. The painful kind, likewise, may be of clear and distinct things, or of things dark and confused.

4. Between all these we may likewise make distinctions with respect to the faculties of the soul. For some kinds of spiritual good, being of knowledge, pertain to the understanding; others, being of affection, pertain to the will; and others, inasmuch as they are imaginary, pertain to the memory.

<sup>1</sup> A, B, e.p. : 'in the will.'

<sup>2</sup> This last sentence is found in A, B and e.p. only.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'thing.'] E.p. : 'For it is quite a certain thing . . .'

5. We shall leave for later consideration those good things that are painful, since<sup>1</sup> they pertain to the passive night, in treating of which we shall have to speak of them; and likewise the delectable blessings which we described as being of things confused and not distinct, of which we shall treat hereafter, since they pertain to that general, confused and loving knowledge wherein is effected the union of the soul with God, and which we passed over in the second book, deferring it so that we might treat of it later<sup>2</sup> when we should make a division between the apprehensions of the understanding.<sup>3</sup> We shall speak here and now of those delectable blessings which are of things clear and distinct.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

*Of those good things of the spirit which can be distinctly apprehended by the understanding and the memory. Describes how the will is to behave in the matter of rejoicing in them.*

WE might spend much time here upon the multitude of the apprehensions of the memory and the understanding, teaching how the will is to conduct itself with regard to the joy that it may have in them, had we not treated of this at length in the second and the third book. But, since we there spoke of the manner wherein it behoves these two faculties to act with respect to them, in order that they may take the road to Divine union, and since it behoves the will to conduct itself likewise as regards rejoicing in them, it is unnecessary to go over this here; for it suffices to say that wheresoever we there said that those faculties should void themselves of this or that apprehension, it is to be understood also that the will should likewise be voided of joy in them. And in the way wherein it is said that memory and understanding are to conduct themselves with regard to all these apprehensions, the will must conduct itself likewise; for, since the understanding and the other faculties cannot admit or reject anything unless the will intervene therein, it is clear that the same teaching that serves for the one will serve also for the other.

2. It may there be seen, then, what is requisite in this case, for

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'inasmuch as.'

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 119, n. 3, above.

<sup>3</sup> Alc. omits: 'when we should . . . understanding.' E.p. adds to this last phrase: 'and this we shall duly do in the book of the *Dark Night*.'

the soul will fall into all the evils and perils to which we there referred if it cannot direct the rejoicing of the will to God in all those apprehensions.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XXXV

*Of the delectable spiritual good things which can be distinctly apprehended by the will. Describes the kinds of these.*

WE can reduce all the kinds of good which can distinctly cause joy to the will to four: namely, motive, provocative, directive and perfective. Of these we shall speak in turn, each in its order; and first, of the motive kind—namely, images and portraits of saints, oratories and ceremonies.

2. As touching images and portraits, there may be much vanity and vain rejoicing in these. For, though they are most important for Divine worship and most necessary to move the will to devotion, as is shown by the approval given to them and the use made of them by our Mother Church (for which reason it is always well that we should employ them, in order to awaken our lukewarmness), there are many persons who rejoice rather in the painting and decoration of them than in what they represent.

3. The use of images has been ordained by the Church for two principal ends—namely, that we may reverence the saints in them, and that the will may be moved and devotion to the saints awakened by them. When they serve this purpose they are beneficial and the use of them is necessary; and therefore we must choose those that are most true and lifelike, and that most move the will to devotion, and our eyes must ever be fixed upon this motive rather than upon the value and cunning of their workmanship and decoration. For, as I say, there are some who pay more attention to the cunning with which an image is made, and to its value, than to what it represents; and that interior devotion which they ought to direct spiritually to the saint whom they see not, forgetting the image at once, since it serves only as a motive,<sup>2</sup> they squander upon the cunning and the decoration of its outward workmanship. In this way sense is pleased and delighted, and

<sup>1</sup> Alc. abbreviates: 'It may there be seen what is requisite herein, for the soul will fall into all those evils if it cannot direct itself to God.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits the phrase: 'forgetting . . . as a motive.'

the love and rejoicing of the will remain there. This is a complete hindrance to true spirituality, which demands annihilation of the affections as to all particular things.

4. This will become quite clear from the detestable custom which certain persons observe with regard to images in these our days. Holding not in abhorrence the vain trappings of the world, they adorn images with the garments which from time to time vain persons invent in order to satisfy their own pleasures and vanities.<sup>1</sup> So they clothe images with garments reprehensible even in themselves, a kind of vanity which was, and is still, abhorrent to the saints whom the images represent. Herein, with their help, the devil succeeds in canonizing his vanities, by clothing the saints with them, not without causing them great displeasure. And in this way the honest and grave devotion of the soul, which rejects and spurns all vanity and every trace of it, becomes with them little more than a dressing of dolls; some persons use images merely as idols upon which they have set their rejoicing.<sup>2</sup> And thus you will see certain persons who are never tired of adding one image to another, and wish them to be of this or that kind and workmanship, and to be placed in this or that manner, so as to be pleasing to sense; and they make little account of the devotion of the heart. They are as much attached to them as was Michas to his idols,<sup>3</sup> or as was Laban;<sup>4</sup> for the one ran out of his house crying aloud because they were being taken from him; and the other, having made a long journey and been very wroth because of them, disturbed all the household stuff of Jacob, in searching for them.

5. The person who is truly<sup>5</sup> devout sets his devotion principally upon that which is invisible; he needs few images and uses few, and chooses those that harmonize with the Divine rather than with the human, clothing them, and with them himself, in the garments of the world to come, and following its fashions rather than those of this world. For not only does an image belonging to this world in no way influence his desire; it does not even lead him to think of this world, in spite of his having before his eyes something worldly, akin to the world's interests. Nor is his heart attached to the images that he uses; if they are taken from him, he grieves very little, for he seeks within himself the living image, which is Christ crucified, for Whose sake he even desires that all should be taken from him and he should have

<sup>1</sup> A, B, e.p. have 'frivolities' for 'vanities.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: '... little more than curiosity and vanity.'

<sup>3</sup> Judges xviii, 22-4.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis xxxi, 34-7.

<sup>5</sup> Alc. alone has 'truly.'

nothing. Even when the motives and means which lead him closest to God<sup>1</sup> are taken from him, he remains in tranquillity. For the soul is nearer perfection when it is tranquil and joyous, though it be deprived of these motives, than if it has possession of them together with desire and attachment. For, although it is good to be pleased to have such images as assist the soul to greater devotion (for which reason it is those which move it most that must always be chosen), yet it is something far removed from perfection to be so greatly attached to them as to possess them with attachment, so that, if they are taken away from the soul, it becomes sad.

6. Let the soul be sure that, the more closely it is attached to an image or a motive,<sup>2</sup> the less will its devotion and prayer mount to God. For, although it is true that, since some are more appropriate than others, and excite devotion more than others, it is well, for this reason alone, to be more affectioned to some than to others, as I have just now said,<sup>3</sup> yet there must be none of the attachment and affection which I have described. Otherwise, that which has to sustain the spirit in its flight to God, in total forgetfulness, will be wholly occupied by sense, and the soul will be completely immersed in a delight afforded it by what are but instruments. These instruments I have to use, but solely in order to assist me in devotion; and, on account of my imperfection, they may well serve me as a hindrance, no less so than may affection and attachment to anything else.<sup>4</sup>

7.<sup>5</sup> But, though perhaps in this matter of images you may think that there is something to be said on the other side, if you have not clearly understood how much detachment and poverty of spirit is required by perfection, at least you cannot excuse the imperfection which is commonly indulged with regard to rosaries; for you will hardly find anyone who has not some weakness with regard to these, desiring them to be of this workmanship rather than of that,<sup>6</sup> or of this colour or metal rather than of that, or decorated in some one style or in some other. Yet no one style is better than another for the hearing of a prayer by God, for this depends upon the simple and true heart,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'Even when the means that seemed to be leading him closest to God . . .'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'or a motive of sense.'

<sup>3</sup> A.l.c. omits: 'as I have just now said.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'no less . . . anything else.'

<sup>5</sup> [In this and the next paragraph the Saint is more than usually personal in his approach to the reader. The word *tú* (you) is repeated many times, and placed in emphatic positions, in a way which cannot be exactly reproduced in English.]

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'than of the other.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'and upright heart.'

which looks at no more than pleasing God, and, apart from the question of indulgences, cares no more for one rosary than for another.

8. Our vain concupiscence is of such a nature and quality that it tries to establish itself in everything; and it is like the worm which destroys healthy wood, and works upon things both good and evil. For what else is your desire to have a rosary of cunning workmanship, and your wish that it shall be of one kind rather than of another, but the fixing of your rejoicing upon the instrument? It is like desiring to choose one image rather than another, and considering, not if it will better awaken Divine love within you, but only if it is more precious and more cunningly made. If you employed your desire and rejoicing solely in the love of God, you would care nothing for any of these considerations. It is most vexatious to see certain spiritual persons so greatly attached to the manner and workmanship of these instruments and motives, and to the curiosity and vain pleasure which they find in them: you will never see them satisfied; they will be continually leaving one thing for another, and forgetting and forsaking spiritual devotion for these visible things, to which they have affection and attachment, sometimes of just the same kind as that which a man has to temporal things; and from this they receive no small harm.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XXXVI

*Which continues to treat of images, and describes the ignorance of certain persons with respect to them.*

THERE is much that might be said of the stupidity which many persons display with regard to images; their foolishness reaches such a point that some of them place more confidence in one kind of image than in another, believing that God will hear them more readily because of these than because of those, even when both represent the same thing, as when there are two of Christ or two of Our Lady. And this happens because they have more affection for the one kind of workmanship than for the other; which implies the crudest ideas concerning intercourse with God and the worship and honour that are owed to Him, which has solely to do with the faith and the

<sup>1</sup> So A, B, e.p. Alc. abbreviates the last sentence thus: 'And it is a pity to see certain spiritual persons so greatly attached to the manner and workmanship of these instruments, and having the [same] affection and attachment to them as to other temporal things,' C, D also abbreviate, but resemble the other authorities rather than Alc.

purity of heart of him that prays.<sup>1</sup> For if God sometimes grants more favours by means of one image rather than by another of the same kind, it is not because there is more virtue to this effect in one than in another (however much difference there may be in their workmanship), but because some persons better awaken their own devotion by one than by another. If they had the same devotion for the one as for the other (or even without the use of either), they would receive the same favours from God.<sup>2</sup>

2. Hence the reason for which God works<sup>3</sup> miracles and grants favours by means of one kind of image rather than by another is not that these should be esteemed more than those, but to the end that, by means of the wonder that they cause, there may be awakened sleeping devotion and the affection of the faithful for prayer. And hence it comes that, as the contemplation of the image at that time enkindles devotion and makes us to continue in prayer (both these being means whereby God hears and grants that which is asked of Him), therefore, at that time and by means of that same image, God continues to work favours and miracles because of the prayer and affection which are then shown; for it is certain that God does it not because of the image, which in itself is no more than a painted thing, but because of the devotion and faith which the person has toward the saint whom it represents. And so, if you had the same devotion and faith in Our Lady before one image representing her as before another, since the person represented is the same (and even, as we have said, if you had no such image at all), you would receive the same favours. For it is clear from experience that, when God grants certain favours and works miracles, He does so as a rule by means of certain images which are not well carved or cunningly formed or painted, so that the faithful may attribute nothing to the figure or the painting.<sup>4</sup>

3. Furthermore, Our Lord is frequently wont to grant these favours by means of those images that are most remote and solitary. One reason for this is that the effort necessary to journey to them causes the

<sup>1</sup> E.p. reads: '... in one kind of image than in another, being influenced herein solely by the affection which they have for one figure rather than for another. This implies the crudest and meanest ideas concerning intercourse with God and the worship and honour that are owed to Him, which has principally to do with the faith and the purity of heart of him that prays.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... of the same kind, it is (although there may be much difference in their workmanship) to the end that people may awaken their own devotion better by means of one than by means of another.' This concludes the paragraph, the last sentence being omitted.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.* 'awakens.' Cf. the use of the same metaphor below.]

<sup>4</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'to the painting or the workmanship.'

affections to be increased and makes the act of prayer more earnest. Another reason is that we may withdraw ourselves from noise and from people when we pray, even as did the Lord. Wherefore he that makes a pilgrimage does well if he makes it at a time when no others are doing so, even though the time be unusual. I should never advise him to make a pilgrimage when a great multitude is doing so; for, as a rule, on these occasions, people return in a state of greater distraction than when they went. And many set out on these pilgrimages and make them for recreation rather than for devotion. Where there is devotion and faith, then, any image will suffice; but, if there is none, none will suffice.<sup>1</sup> Our Saviour was a very living image in the world; and yet those that had no faith, even though they went about with Him and saw His wondrous works, derived no benefit from them. And this was the reason why, as the Evangelist says, He did few mighty works in His own country.<sup>2</sup>

4. I desire also to speak here of certain supernatural effects which are sometimes produced by certain images upon particular persons. To certain images God gives a particular spiritual influence upon such persons, so that the figure of the image and the devotion caused by it remain fixed in the mind, and the person has them ever present before him; and so, when he suddenly thinks of the image, the spiritual influence which works upon him is of the same kind as when he saw it—sometimes it is less, but sometimes it is even greater—yet, from another image, although it be of more perfect workmanship, he will not obtain the same spiritual effect.

5. Many persons, too, have devotion to one kind of workmanship rather than to another, and to some they will have no more than a natural inclination and affection, just as we prefer seeing one person's face to another's. And they will naturally become more attracted to a particular image, and will keep it more vividly in their imagination,<sup>3</sup> even though it be not as beautiful as others, just because their nature is attracted to that kind of form and figure which it represents. And some persons will think that the affection which they have for such or such an image is devotion, whereas it will perhaps be no more than natural inclination and affection. Again, it may happen that, when they look at an image, they will see it move, or make signs and gestures and indications, or speak. This, and the variety of supernatural effects caused

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'Where there is no devotion and faith, then, no image will suffice.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke iv, 24. [Rather St. Matthew xiii, 58 or St. Mark vi, 5.]

<sup>3</sup> A: '... and will keep it more vividly, because it is a natural thing and [*sic*] to have it ever in the memory.'

by images of which we have here been speaking, are,<sup>1</sup> it is true, quite frequently good and true effects, produced by God either to increase devotion or so that the soul may have some support on which to lean, because it is somewhat weak, and so that it may not be distracted. Yet frequently, again, they are produced by the devil<sup>2</sup> in order to cause deception and harm. We shall therefore give instruction concerning this in the chapter following.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

*Of how the rejoicing of the will must be directed, by way of images, to God, so that the soul may not go astray because of them or be hindered by them.*

JUST as images are of great benefit for remembering God and the saints, and for moving the will to devotion when they are used in the ordinary way,<sup>3</sup> as is fitting, so they will lead to great error if, when supernatural happenings come to pass in connection with them, the soul should not be able to conduct itself as is fitting for its journey to God. For one of the means by which the devil lays hold on incautious souls, with great ease, and obstructs the way of spiritual truth for them, is the use of extraordinary and supernatural<sup>4</sup> happenings, of which he gives examples by means of images, both the material and corporeal images used by the Church, and also those which he is wont to fix in the fancy in relation to such or such a saint, or an image of him, transforming himself into an angel of light that he may deceive. For in those very means which we possess for our relief and help the astute devil contrives to hide himself in order to catch us when we are least prepared. Wherefore it is concerning good things that the soul that is good must ever have the greatest misgivings, for evil things bear their own testimony with them.

2. Hence, in order to avoid all the evils which may happen to the soul in this connection, which are its being hindered from soaring upward to God, or its using images in an unworthy and ignorant

<sup>1</sup> A: '... or speak in this manner or in another. But concerning the supernatural effects, etc., ... they are.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'Yet at other times they are not true [effects] and are apt to be produced by the devil.'

<sup>3</sup> Alc. omits: 'in the ordinary way.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'and rare.' Cf. p. 124, n. 5, above.

manner, or its being deceived by them through natural or supernatural means,<sup>1</sup> all of which are things that we have touched upon above; and in order likewise to purify the rejoicing of the will in them and by means of them to lead the soul to God, for which reason the Church recommends their use, I desire here to set down only one warning, which will suffice for everything; and this warning is that, since images serve us as a motive for invisible things, we must strive to set the motive and the affection and the rejoicing of our will only upon that which in fact they represent. Let the faithful soul, then, be careful that, when he sees the image, he desire not that his senses should be absorbed by it, whether the image be corporeal or imaginary, whether beautifully made, whether richly adorned, whether the devotion that it causes be of sense or of spirit, whether it produce supernatural manifestations or no. The soul must on no account set store by these accidents, nor even regard them, but<sup>2</sup> must raise up its mind from the image to that which it represents, centring the sweetness and rejoicing of its will, together with the prayer and devotion of its spirit, upon God or upon the saint who is being invoked; for that which belongs to the living reality and to the spirit should not be usurped by sense and by the painted object. If the soul do this, it will not be deceived, for it will set no store by anything that the image may say to it, nor will it occupy its sense or its spirit in such a way that they cannot travel freely to God, nor will it place more confidence in one image than in another. And an image which would cause the soul devotion by supernatural means will now do so more abundantly, since the soul will now go with its affections directly to God. For, whensoever God grants these and other favours, He does so by inclining the affection of the joy of the will to that which is invisible, and this He wishes us also to do, by annihilating the power and sweetness of the faculties with respect to these visible things of sense.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'through natural or supernatural means.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. here interpolates: 'having paid to the image the adoration which the Church commands.'

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

*Continues to describe motive good. Speaks of oratories and places dedicated to prayer.*

I THINK it has now been explained how the spiritual person may find as great imperfection in the accidents of images, by setting his pleasure and rejoicing<sup>1</sup> upon them, as in other corporeal and temporal things, and perchance imperfection more perilous still. And I say perchance more perilous, because, when a person says that the objects of his rejoicing are holy, he feels more secure, and fears not to cling to them and become attached to them in a natural way. And thus such a person is sometimes greatly deceived, thinking himself to be full of devotion because he perceives that he takes pleasure in these holy things, when, perchance, this is due only to his natural desire and temperament, which lead him to this just as they lead him to other things.

2. Hence it arises (we are now beginning to treat of oratories) that there are some persons who never tire of adding to their oratories images of one kind and then of another, and take pleasure in the order and array in which they set them out, so that these oratories may be well adorned and pleasing to behold. Yet they love God no more when their oratories are ornate than when they are simple—nay, rather do they love Him less, since, as we have said, the pleasure which they set upon their painted adornments is stolen from the living reality. It is true that all the adornment and embellishment and respect that can be lavished upon images amounts to very little, and that therefore those who have images and treat them with a lack of decency and reverence are worthy of severe reproof, as are those who have images so ill-carved that they take away devotion rather than produce it, for which reason some image-makers who are very defective and unskilled in this art should be forbidden to practise it. But what has that to do with the attachment and affection and desire which you have<sup>2</sup> for these outward adornments and decorations, when your senses are absorbed by them in such a way that your heart is hindered from journeying to God, and from loving Him and forgetting all things for love of Him?

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'and rejoicing.'

<sup>2</sup> [Again the Saint begins, repeatedly and emphatically, to employ the pronoun *tu*. Cf. p. 293, n. 5, above.]

If you fail in the latter aim for the sake of the former, not only will God not esteem you for it, but He will even chasten you for not having sought His pleasure in all things rather than your own. This you may clearly gather from the description of that feast which they made for His Majesty when He entered Jerusalem. They received Him with songs and with branches, and the Lord wept;<sup>1</sup> for their hearts were very far removed from Him and they paid Him reverence only with outward adornments and signs. We may say of them that they were making a festival for themselves rather than for God; and this is done nowadays by many, who, when there is some solemn festival in a place,<sup>2</sup> are apt to rejoice because of the pleasure which they themselves will find in it—whether in seeing or in being seen, or whether in eating or in some other selfish thing—rather than to rejoice at being acceptable to God. By these inclinations and intentions they are giving no pleasure to God. Especially is this so when those who celebrate festivals invent ridiculous and undevout things to intersperse in them, so that they may incite people to laughter, which causes them greater distraction. And other persons invent things which merely please people rather than move them to devotion.

3. And what shall I say of persons who celebrate festivals for reasons connected with their own interests? They alone, and God Who sees them, know if their regard and desire are set upon such interests rather than upon the service of God. Let them realize, when they act in any of these ways, that they are making festivals in their own honour rather than in that of God. For that which they do for their own pleasure, or for the pleasure of men, God will not account as done for Himself. Yea, many who take part in God's festivals will be enjoying themselves even while God is wroth with them, as He was with the children of Israel when they made a festival, and sang and danced before their idol, thinking that they were keeping a festival in honour of God; of whom He slew many thousands.<sup>3</sup> Or again, as He was with the priests Nadab and Abiu, the sons of Aaron, whom He slew with the censers in their hands, because they offered strange fire.<sup>4</sup> Or as with the man that entered the wedding feast ill-adorned<sup>5</sup> and ill-garbed, whom the king commanded to be thrown into outer darkness, bound hand and foot.<sup>6</sup> By this it may be known how ill God suffers these irreverences in assemblies that are held for His service. For how many

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew xxi, 9. [Cf. St. Luke xix, 41.]

<sup>2</sup> Exodus xxxii, 7-28.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'ill-clad.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'when there is a solemnity.'

<sup>4</sup> Leviticus x, 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> St. Matthew xxii, 12-13.

festivals, O my God, are made Thee by the sons of men to the devil's advantage rather than to Thine! The devil takes a delight in them, because such gatherings bring him business, as they might to a trader. And how often wilt Thou say concerning them: 'This people honoureth Me with their lips alone, but their heart is far from Me, for they serve Me from a wrong cause!'<sup>1</sup> For the sole reason<sup>2</sup> for which God must be served is that He is Who He is, and not for any other mediate ends. And thus to serve Him for other reasons than solely that He is Who He is, is to serve Him without regard for Him as the Ultimate Reason.<sup>3</sup>

4. Returning now to oratories, I say that some persons deck them out for their own pleasure rather than for the pleasure of God; and some persons set so little account by the devotion which they arouse that they think no more of them than of their own secular ante-chambers; some, indeed, think even less of them, for they take more pleasure in the profane than in the Divine.

5. But let us cease speaking of this and speak only of those who are more particular<sup>4</sup>—that is to say, of those who consider themselves devout persons. Many of these centre their desire and pleasure upon their oratory and its adornments, to such an extent that they squander on them all the time that they should be employing in prayer to God and interior recollection. They cannot see that, by not arranging their oratory with a view to the interior recollection and peace of the soul, they are as much distracted by it as by anything else, and will find the pleasure which they take in it a continual occasion of unrest, and more so still if anyone endeavours to deprive them of it.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

*Of the way in which oratories and churches should be used, so that the spirit may be directed to God.*

WITH regard to the direction of the spirit to God through this kind of good, it is well to point out that it is certainly lawful, and even expedient, for beginners to find some sensible sweetness and pleasure in images, oratories and other visible objects

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew xv, 8. [*Lit.*, 'they serve Me without cause.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'For the principal cause.'

<sup>3</sup> This last sentence is omitted in e.p.

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'that spin more finely'—a common Spanish metaphor.]

of devotion, since they have not yet weaned or detached their desire<sup>1</sup> from things of the world, so that they can leave the one pleasure for the other. They are like a child holding something in one of its hands; to make it loosen its hold upon it we give it something else to hold in the other hand lest it should cry because both its hands are empty. But the spiritual person that would make progress must strip himself of all those pleasures and desires wherein the will can rejoice, for pure spirituality is bound very little to any of those objects, but only to interior recollection and mental converse with God. So, although he makes use of images and oratories, he does so only fleetingly; his spirit at once comes to rest in God and he forgets all things of sense.

2. Wherefore, although it is best to pray where there is most decency, yet notwithstanding one should choose the place where sense and spirit are least hindered from journeying to God. Here we should consider that answer made by Our Saviour to the Samaritan woman, when she asked Him which was the more fitting place wherein to pray, the temple or the mountain, and He answered her<sup>2</sup> that true prayer was not connected with the mountain or with the temple,<sup>3</sup> but that those who adored the Father and were pleasing to Him were those that adored Him in spirit and in truth.<sup>4</sup> Wherefore, although churches and pleasant places are<sup>5</sup> set apart and furnished for prayer (for a church must not be used for aught else), yet, for a matter as intimate<sup>6</sup> as converse held with God, one should choose that place which gives sense the least occupation and the least encouragement. And thus it must not be a place that is pleasant and delectable to sense (like the places that some habitually contrive to find), for otherwise, instead of the recollection of the spirit in God, naught will be achieved save recreation and pleasure and delight of sense. Wherefore it is good to choose a place that is solitary, and even wild, so that the spirit may resolutely and directly soar upward to God, and not be hindered or detained by visible things; for, although these sometimes help to raise up the spirit, it is better to forget them at once and to rest in God. For this reason Our Saviour was wont to choose solitary places for prayer, and such as occupied the senses but little, in order to give us an example. He chose places that lifted up the soul to God, such as mountains,<sup>7</sup> which are

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'their palate.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'or with the temple.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. has 'may be' for 'are.'

<sup>6</sup> A, B: 'as important and intimate'.

<sup>7</sup> Alc. ends the paragraph here.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and He answered her.'

<sup>4</sup> St. John iv, 23-4.

lifted up above the earth, and are ordinarily bare, thus offering no occasion for recreation of the senses.

3. The truly spiritual man, then, is never tied to a place of prayer because of its suitability in this way or in that, nor does he even consider such a thing, for, if he did so, he would still be tied to sense. But, to the end that he may attain interior recollection, and forget everything, he chooses<sup>1</sup> the places most free from sensible objects and attractions, withdrawing his attention from all these, that he may be able to rejoice in his God and be far removed from all things created. But it is a remarkable thing to see some spiritual persons, who waste all their time in setting up oratories and furnishing places which please their temperaments or inclinations, yet make little account of interior recollection, which is the most important thing, but of which they have very little. If they had more of it, they would be incapable of taking pleasure in those methods and manners of devotion, which would simply weary them.

## CHAPTER XL

*Which continues to direct the spirit to interior recollection with reference to what has been said.*

THE reason, then, why some spiritual persons never enter perfectly into the true joys of the spirit is that they never succeed in raising their desire for rejoicing above these things that are outward and visible. Let such take note that, although the visible oratory and temple is a decent place set apart for prayer, and an image is a motive to prayer, the sweetness and delight of the soul must not be set upon the motive or the visible temple, lest the soul should forget to pray in the living temple, which is the interior recollection of the soul. The Apostle, to remind us of this, said: 'See that your bodies are living temples of the Holy Spirit, Who dwelleth in you.'<sup>2</sup> And this thought is suggested by the words of Christ which we have quoted, namely that they who truly adore God must needs adore Him in spirit and in truth.<sup>3</sup> For God takes little heed of your oratories and your places set apart for prayer if your desire and pleasure are

<sup>1</sup> E.p. abbreviates, from the beginning of the paragraph: 'Wherefore the truly spiritual man, considering only interior recollection and forgetting everything, chooses.'

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians iii, 16. E.p. adds: 'And Christ said through Luke: The kingdom of God is within you' (St. Luke xvii, 21).

<sup>3</sup> St. John iv, 24.

bound to them, and thus you have little interior detachment, which is spiritual poverty and renunciation of all things that you may possess.

2. In order, then, to purge the will from vain desire and rejoicing in this matter, and to lead it to God in your prayer, you must see only to this, that your conscience is pure, and your will perfect with God, and your spirit truly set upon Him. Then, as I have said, you should choose the place that is the farthest withdrawn and the most solitary that you can find, and devote all the rejoicing of the will to calling upon God and glorifying Him; and you should take no account of those whims about outward things, but rather strive to renounce them. For, if the soul be attached to the delight of sensible devotion, it will never succeed in passing onward to the power of spiritual delight, which is found in spiritual detachment coming through interior recollection.

## CHAPTER XLI

*Of certain evils into which those persons fall who give themselves to pleasure in sensible objects and who frequent places of devotion in the way that has been described.*

**M**ANY evils, both interior and exterior, come to the spiritual person when he desires to follow after sweetness of sense in these matters aforementioned. For, as regards the spirit, he will never attain to interior spiritual recollection, which consists in neglecting all such things, and in causing the soul to forget all this sensible sweetness, and to enter into true recollection, and to acquire the virtues by dint of effort. As regards exterior things, he will become unable to dispose himself for prayer in all places, but will be confined to places that are to his taste; and thus he will often fail in prayer, because, as the saying goes, he can understand no other book than his own village.

2. Furthermore, this desire leads such persons into great inconstancy. Some of them never continue in one place or even always in one state: now they will be seen in one place, now in another; now they will go to one hermitage, now to another; now they will set up this oratory, now that.<sup>1</sup> Some of them, again, wear out their lives in changing from one state or manner of living to another. For, as they possess only the sensible fervour and joy to be found in spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Alc. omits: 'now they . . . now that.'

things, and have never had the strength to attain to spiritual recollection by the renunciation of their own will, and submitting to suffering inconveniences, whenever they see a place which they think well suited for devotion, or any kind of life or state well adapted to their temperament and inclination, they at once go after it and leave the condition or state in which they were before. And, as they have come under the influence of that sensible pleasure, it follows that they soon seek something new, for sensible pleasure is not constant, but very quickly fails.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XLII

*Of three different kinds of place for devotion and of how the will should conduct itself with regard to them.*

I CAN think of three kinds of place by means of which God is wont to move the will to devotion. The first consists in certain dispositions of the ground and situation, which, by means of a pleasing effect of variety, whether obtained by the arrangement of the ground or of trees, or by means of quiet solitude, naturally awaken devotion. These places it is beneficial to use, if they at once lead the will to God and cause it to forget the places themselves, even as, in order to reach one's journey's end, it is advisable not to pause and consider the means and motive of the journey more than is necessary. For those who strive to refresh their desires and to gain sensible sweetness will rather find spiritual aridity and distraction; for spiritual sweetness and satisfaction are not found save in interior recollection.

2. When they are in such a place, therefore, they should forget it and strive to be inwardly with God, as though they were not in that place at all. For, if they be attached to the pleasure and delight of the place, as we have said, they are seeking refreshment of sense and instability of spirit rather than spiritual repose. The anchorites and other holy hermits, who in the most vast and pleasing wildernesses selected the smallest places that sufficed for them, built there the smallest cells and caves, in which to imprison themselves. Saint Benedict was in such a place for three years, and another—namely, Saint Simon<sup>2</sup>—bound himself with a cord that he might have no more liberty nor go any

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'and very quickly fails.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'namely, Saint Simon.' The allusion is, of course, to St. Simon Stylites.

farther than to places within its reach; and even so did many who are too numerous ever to be counted. Those saints understood very clearly that, if they quenched not the desire and eagerness for spiritual sweetness and pleasure, they could not attain to spirituality.

3. The second kind is of a more special nature, for it relates to certain places (not necessarily deserts, but any places whatsoever) where God is accustomed to grant to a few special persons certain very delectable spiritual favours; ordinarily, such a place attracts the heart of the person who has received a favour there, and sometimes gives him great desires and yearnings to return to it; although, when he goes there, what happened to him before is not repeated, since this is not within his control. For God grants these favours<sup>1</sup> when and how and where He pleases, without being tied to any place or time, nor to the free-will of the person to whom He grants them. Yet it is good to go and pray in such places at times if the desire is free from attachment; and this for three reasons. First, because although, as we said, God is not bound to any place, it would seem that He has willed to be praised by a soul in the place where He has granted it a favour. Secondly, because in that place the soul is more mindful to give thanks to God for that which it has received there. Thirdly, because, by remembering that favour, the soul's devotion is the more keenly awakened.

4. It is for these reasons that a man should go to such places, and not because he thinks that God is bound to grant him favours there, in such a way as to be unable to grant them wheresoever He wills, for the soul is a fitter and more comely place for God than any physical place. Thus we read in Holy Scripture that Abraham built an altar in the very place where God appeared to him, and invoked His holy name there, and that afterwards, coming from Egypt, he returned by the same road where God had appeared to him, and called upon God there once more at the same altar which he had built.<sup>2</sup> Jacob, too, marked the place where God had appeared to him, leaning upon a ladder, by raising there a stone which he anointed with oil.<sup>3</sup> And Agar gave a name to the place where the angel had appeared to her, and prized it highly, saying: 'Of a truth I have here seen the back of Him that seeth me.'<sup>4</sup>

5. The third kind consists of certain special places which God chooses that He may be called upon and served there, such as Mount Sinai, where He gave the law to Moses.<sup>5</sup> And the place that He showed

<sup>1</sup> A, B: 'since it is not within his power to receive those favours; God grants them . . .

<sup>2</sup> Genesis xii, 8; xiii, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis xvi, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis xxviii, 13-19.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus xxiv, 12.

Abraham, that he might sacrifice his son there.<sup>1</sup> And likewise Mount Horeb, where He appeared to our father Elias.<sup>2</sup>

6. The reason for which God chooses these places rather than others, that He may be praised there, is known to Himself alone. What it behoves us to know is that all is for our advantage, and that He will hear our prayers there, and also in any place where we pray to Him with perfect faith; although there is much greater opportunity for us to be heard in places dedicated to His service, since the Church has appointed and dedicated those places to that end.

## CHAPTER XLIII

*Which treats of other motives for prayer that many persons use—namely, a great variety of ceremonies.*

THE useless joys and the imperfect attachment which many persons have to the things which we have described are perhaps to some extent excusable, since these persons act more or less innocently with regard to them. But<sup>3</sup> the great reliance which some persons place in many kinds of ceremonies introduced by uninstructed persons who lack the simplicity of faith is intolerable. Let us here disregard those which bear various extraordinary names or use terms that signify nothing, and also other things that are not sacred which persons who are foolish and gross and mistrustful in spirit are wont to interpolate in their prayers. For these are clearly evil, and involve sin, and many of them imply a secret compact with the devil; by such means these persons provoke God to wrath and not to mercy, wherefore I treat them not here.

2. I wish to speak solely of those ceremonies into which enters nothing of a suspicious nature, and of which many people make use nowadays with indiscreet devotion, attributing such efficacy and faith to these ways and manners wherein they desire to perform their

<sup>1</sup> Genesis xxii, 2.

<sup>2</sup> 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] xix, 8. A, B, e.p. amplify, thus: 'And likewise Mount Horeb, whither God sent for our father Elias to come, that He might show Himself to him there. And the place which Saint Michael set apart for his service, namely Mount Garganuc, when he appeared to the bishop of Siponto, and said that he was the guardian of that place and that an oratory should be dedicated to God in memory of the angels. And the glorious Virgin chose (by the remarkable sign of snow) a place for the church, to be named after her, which she desired Patricius to build.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. alone has 'but.'

devotions and prayers, that they believe that, if they fail to the very slightest extent in them, or go beyond their limits, God will not be served by them nor will He hear them. They place more reliance upon these methods and kinds of ceremony than upon the reality of their prayer, and herein they greatly offend and displease God. I refer, for example, to a Mass at which there must be so many candles, neither more nor fewer; which has to be said by the priest in such or such a way; and must be at such or such an hour, and neither sooner nor later; and must be after a certain day, and neither sooner nor later; and the prayers and stations must be made at such and such times, with such or such ceremonies, and neither sooner nor later nor in any other manner; and the person who makes them must have such or such qualities or qualifications. And there are those who think that, if any of these details which they have laid down be wanting, nothing is accomplished.<sup>1</sup>

3. And, what is worse, and indeed intolerable, is that certain persons desire to feel some effect in themselves, or to have their petitions fulfilled, or to know that the purpose of these ceremonious prayers of theirs will be accomplished. This is nothing less than to tempt God and to anger Him greatly, so much so that He sometimes gives leave to the devil to deceive them, making them feel and understand things that are far removed from the benefit of their soul, which they deserve because of the attachment that they show in their prayers, not desiring God's will, rather than their own desires, to be done therein; and thus, because they place not their whole confidence in God, nothing goes well with them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A, B add: 'and [there are] a thousand other things that are offered and used.' So e.p., but omitting: 'offered and.'

<sup>2</sup> With the last word of this chapter, which is also the last word of the page in Alc., the copy of P. Juan Evangelista comes to an end. The remainder of Alc. comes from another very early copy which, in the time of P. Andrés, existed at Duruelo (cf. p. xviii, above).

## CHAPTER XLIV

*Of the manner wherein the rejoicing and strength of the will must be directed to God through these devotions.*

LET these persons, then, know that, the more reliance they place on these things and ceremonies,<sup>1</sup> the less confidence they have in God, and that they will not obtain of God that which they desire. There are certain persons who pray<sup>2</sup> for their own ends rather than for the honour of God. Although they suppose that a thing will be done if it be for the service of God, and not otherwise, yet, because of their attachment to it and the vain rejoicing which they have in it, they multiply a large number of petitions for a thing, when it would be better for them to substitute others of greater importance to them, such as for the true cleansing of their consciences, and for a real application to things concerning their own salvation, leaving to a much later season all those other petitions of theirs which are not of this kind. And in this way they would attain that which is of the greatest importance to them, and at the same time all the other things that are good for them (although they might not have prayed for them), much better and much earlier than if they had expended all their energy on those things. For this the Lord promised, through the Evangelist, saying: 'Seek ye first and principally the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things shall be added unto you.'<sup>3</sup>

2. This is the seeking and the asking that is most pleasing to God, and, in order to obtain the fulfilment of the petitions which we have in our hearts, there is no better way than to direct the energy of our prayer to the thing that most pleases God. For then not only will He give that which we ask of Him, which is salvation, but also that which He sees to be fitting and good for us, although we pray not for it. This David makes clear in a psalm where he says: 'The Lord is nigh unto those that call upon Him in truth,'<sup>4</sup> that beg Him<sup>5</sup> for the things that are in the highest degree true, such as salvation; for of these he then says: 'He will fulfil the will of them that fear Him, and will hear their

<sup>1</sup> B: 'the more they rely on their ceremonies.' E.p.: 'the more they lean on these their ceremonies.'

<sup>2</sup> A, e.p.: 'who work' [*obran* for *oran*].

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew vi, 33.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm cxliv, 18 [A.V., cxlv, 18].

<sup>5</sup> E.p., keeping near the Latin text of the psalm, has: '... that call upon Him, to those that call upon Him in truth. And those that call upon Him in truth are such as beg Him.'

cries, and will save them. For God is the guardian of those that truly love Him.<sup>1</sup> And thus, this nearness to God of which David here speaks is naught else than His being ready to satisfy them and grant them even that which it has not passed through their minds to ask. Even so we read that, because Solomon did well in asking God for a thing that was pleasing to Him—namely, wisdom to lead and rule his people righteously—God answered him, saying: ‘Because more than aught else thou didst desire wisdom, and askedst not victory over thine enemies, with their deaths, nor riches, nor long life, I will not only give thee the wisdom that thou askest to rule My people righteously, but I will likewise give thee that which thou hast not asked—namely, riches and substance and glory—so that neither before thee nor after thee shall there be any king like unto thee.’<sup>2</sup> And this He did, giving him peace also from his enemies, so that all around him should pay tribute to him and trouble him not. We read of a similar incident in Genesis, where God promised Abraham to increase the generation of his lawful son, like the stars of Heaven, even as he had asked of Him, and said to him: ‘Likewise I will increase the son of the bondwoman, for he is thy son.’<sup>3</sup>

3. In this way, then, the strength of the will and its rejoicing must be directed to God in our petitions, and we must not be anxious to cling to ceremonial inventions which are not used or approved by the Catholic Church. We must leave the method and manner of saying Mass to the priest, whom the Church sets there in her place, giving him her orders as to how he is to do it. And let not such persons use new methods, as if they knew more than the Holy Spirit and His Church. If, when they pray in their simplicity, God hears them not, let them not think that He will hear them any the more however many may be their inventions. For God is such that, if they behave towards Him as they should, and conformably to His nature, they will do with Him whatsoever they will; but, if they act from selfish ends, they cannot speak with Him.<sup>4</sup>

4. With regard to further ceremonies connected with prayer and other devotions, let not the will be set upon other ceremonies and forms of prayer than those which Christ<sup>5</sup> taught us.<sup>6</sup> For it is clear that, when His disciples besought Him that He would teach them to pray, He would tell them all that is necessary in order that the Eternal

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxliv, 19–20 [A.V., cxlv, 19–20].

<sup>2</sup> 2 Paralipomenon [A.V., 2 Chronicles] i, 11–12.

<sup>3</sup> So Alc. E.p. omits the sentence: ‘For God . . . speak with Him.’

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: ‘Christ and His Church.’

<sup>5</sup> Genesis xxi, 13.

<sup>6</sup> St. Luke xi, 1–4.

Father may hear us, since He knew the Father's nature so well. Yet all that He taught them was the Pater Noster, with its seven petitions, wherein are included all our needs, both spiritual and temporal;<sup>1</sup> and He taught them not many other kinds of prayer, either in words or in ceremonies. On the contrary, He told them that when they prayed they ought not to desire to speak much, since our heavenly Father knows well what is meet for us.<sup>2</sup> He charged them only, but with great insistence, that they should persevere in prayer (that is, in the prayer of the Pater Noster), saying elsewhere: 'It behoves us always to pray and never to fail.'<sup>3</sup> But He taught not a variety of petitions, but rather that our petitions should be repeated frequently and with fervour and care. For, as I say, in them is contained all that is the will of God and all that is meet for us. Wherefore, when His Majesty drew near three times to the Eternal Father, He prayed all these three times, using those very words of the Pater Noster, as the Evangelists tell us, saying: 'Father, if it cannot be but that I must drink this cup, Thy will be done.'<sup>4</sup> And the ceremonies which He taught us to use in our prayers are only two. Either we are to pray in the secret place of our chamber, where without noise and without paying heed to any we can pray with the most perfect and pure heart, as He said in these words: 'When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber and shut the door and pray.'<sup>5</sup> Or else He taught us to go to a solitary and desert place, as He Himself did, and at the best and quietest time of night. And thus there is no reason to fix any limit of time, or any appointed days, or to set apart one time more than another for our devotions, neither is there any reason to use<sup>6</sup> other forms, in our words and prayers, nor phrases with double meanings, but only those which the Church uses and in the manner wherein she uses them; for all are reduced to those which we have described—namely, the Pater Noster.

5. I do not for this reason condemn—nay, I rather approve—the fixing of days on which certain persons sometimes arrange to make their devotions, such as novenas,<sup>7</sup> or other such things. I condemn only their conduct as concerns the fixity of their methods and the ceremonies with which they practise them. Even so did Judith rebuke and reprove the people of Bethulia because they had limited God as to the

<sup>1</sup> A, B: 'both corporeal and spiritual.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xviii, 1.

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew vi, 6.

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew vi, 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> St. Matthew xxvi, 39.

<sup>6</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'And thus there is no reason to fix times or fixed [*sic*] days, nor is there any reason to use.'

<sup>7</sup> So A, B. The other authorities [and P. Silverio] read: 'such as to fast.'

time wherein they awaited His mercy,<sup>1</sup> saying: 'Do ye set God a time for His mercies?' To do this, she says, is not to move God to clemency, but to awaken His wrath.<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER XLV

*Which treats of the second kind of distinct good, wherein the will may rejoice vainly.*

THE second kind of distinct and delectable good wherein the will may rejoice vainly is that which provokes or persuades us to serve God and which we have called provocative. This class comprises preachers, and we might speak of it in two ways, namely, as affecting the preachers themselves and as affecting their hearers. For, as regards both, we must not fail to observe that both must direct the rejoicing of their will to God, with respect to this exercise.

2. In the first place, it must be pointed out to the preacher, if he is to cause his people profit and not to embarrass himself<sup>3</sup> with vain joy and presumption, that preaching is a spiritual exercise rather than a vocal one. For, although it is practised by means of outward words, its power and efficacy reside not in these but in the inward spirit. Wherefore, however lofty be the doctrine that is preached, and however choice the rhetoric and sublime the style wherein it is clothed, it brings as a rule no more benefit than is present in the spirit of the preacher. For, although it is true that the word of God is of itself efficacious, according to those words of David, 'He will give to His voice a voice of virtue,'<sup>4</sup> yet fire, which has also a virtue—that of burning—will not burn when the material is not prepared.

3. To the end that the preacher's instruction may exercise its full force, there must be two kinds of preparation: that of the preacher and that of the hearer; for as a rule the benefit derived from a sermon depends upon the preparation of the teacher. For this reason it is said that, as is the master, so is wont to be the disciple. For, when in the Acts of the Apostles those seven sons of that chief priest of the Jews<sup>5</sup> were wont to cast out devils in the same form as Saint Paul, the devil rose up against them, saying: 'Jesus I confess and Paul I know, but you, who are ye?'<sup>6</sup> And then, attacking them, he stripped and wounded

<sup>1</sup> A, B: 'awaited mercy from His hand.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'and not to become vain.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'those seven sons of Sceva.'

<sup>4</sup> Judith viii, 11–12.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxxvii, 34 [A.V., lxxviii, 33].

<sup>6</sup> Acts xix, 15.

them. This was only because they had not the fitting preparation, and not because Christ willed not that they should do this in His name. For the Apostles once found a man, who was not a disciple, casting out a devil in the name of Christ, and they forbade him, and the Lord reproved them for it, saying: 'Forbid him not, for no man that has done any mighty works in My name shall be able to speak evil of Me after a brief space of time.'<sup>1</sup> But He is angry with those who, though teaching the law of God, keep it not, and, while preaching spirituality, possess it not. For this reason God says, through Saint Paul: 'Thou teachest others and teachest not thyself. Thou who preachest that men should not steal, stealest.'<sup>2</sup> And through David the Holy Spirit says: 'To the sinner, God said: "Why dost thou declare My justice and take My law in thy mouth, when thou hast hated discipline and cast My words behind thee?"'<sup>3</sup> Here it is made plain that He will give them no spirituality whereby they may bear fruit.

4. It is a common matter of observation that, so far as we can judge here below, the better is the life of the preacher, the greater is the fruit that he bears, however undistinguished his style may be, however small his rhetoric and however ordinary his instruction. For it is the warmth that comes from the living spirit that clings; whereas the other kind of preacher will produce very little profit, however sublime be his style and his instruction. For, although it is true that a good style and gestures and sublime instruction and well-chosen language influence men and produce much effect when accompanied by true spirituality, yet without this, although a sermon give<sup>4</sup> pleasure and delight to the sense and the understanding, very little or nothing of its sweetness remains in the will. As a rule, in this case, the will remains as weak and remiss with regard to good works as it was before. Although marvellous things may have been marvellously said by the preacher, they serve only to delight the ear, like a concert of music or a peal of bells; the spirit, as I say, goes no farther from its habits than before, since the voice has no virtue to raise one that is dead from his grave.

5. Little does it matter that one kind of music should sound better than another if the better kind move me not more than the other to do good works. For, although marvellous things may have been said, they are at once forgotten if they have not fired the will. For, not only do they of themselves bear little fruit, but the fastening of the sense

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark ix, 38-9.

<sup>2</sup> Romans ii, 21.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xlix, 16-17 [A.V., l, 16-17].

<sup>4</sup> So Alc. The other authorities have: 'although it give . . .'

upon the pleasure that it finds in that sort of instruction hinders the instruction from passing to the spirit, so that only the method and the accidents of what has been said are appreciated, and the preacher is praised for this characteristic or for that, and followed from such motives as these rather than because of the purpose of amendment of life which he has inspired. This doctrine is well explained to the Corinthians by Saint Paul, where he says: 'I, brethren, when I came to you, came not preaching Christ with loftiness of instruction and of wisdom, and my words and my preaching consisted not in the rhetoric of human wisdom, but in the showing forth of the spirit and of the truth.'<sup>1</sup>

6. Although the intention of the Apostle here, like my own intention, is not to condemn good style and rhetoric and phraseology, for, on the contrary, these are of great importance to the preacher, as in everything else, since good phraseology and style raise up and restore things that are fallen and ruined, even as bad phraseology ruins and destroys good things. . . .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 1-4. B, e.p.: 'and of virtue.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'End of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*.' The treatise thus remains incomplete, the chapter on the preacher being unfinished and no part of any chapter upon the hearer having come down to us. Further, the last two divisions of the four mentioned in Chap. xxxv, § 1 are not treated in any of the MSS. or early editions.

The fragments which P. Gerardo [*Obras*, etc., I, 402-10] added to the *Ascent*, forming two chapters, cannot be considered as a continuation of this book. They are in reality a long and admirable letter [Letter XI in this edition: Vol. III, p. 255], written to a religious, who was one of the Saint's spiritual sons, and copied by P. Jerónimo de San José in his *History of St. John of the Cross* (Bk. VI, Chap. vii). There is not the slightest doubt that the letter, which was written at Segovia, and is fully dated, is a genuine letter, and not an editor's maltreatment of part of a treatise. Only the similarity of its subject with that of these last chapters is responsible for its having been added to the *Ascent*. It is hard to see how P. Gerardo could have been misled about a matter which is so clear.

[This question was re-opened, in 1950, by P. Sobrino (see Vol. III, p. 240), who adds TG and a codex belonging to the Discalced Carmelite Fathers of Madrid to the list of the MSS. which give the fragments as part of the *Ascent*, making six authorities in all, against which can be set only the proved and admitted reliability of P. Jerónimo de San José. P. Sobrino, who discusses the matter (*Estudios*, etc., pp. 166-93) in great detail, hazards a plausible and attractive solution, which he reinforces with substantial evidence—that of a 'double redaction.' According to this theory, the Saint, in writing to the religious of Letter XI, made use, for the substance of his instruction, of two fragments which were to have gone into the *Ascent*. Considering how often in his writings he doubled passages, to say nothing of whole works, it is quite understandable that he should have utilized two unincorporated, and indeed unfinished, passages for a private letter.]

# DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

## INTRODUCTION

SOMEWHAT reluctantly, out of respect for a venerable tradition, we publish the *Dark Night* as a separate treatise, though in reality it is a continuation of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and fulfils the undertakings given in it:

The first night or purgation is of the sensual part of the soul, which is treated in the present stanza, and will be treated in the first part of this book. And the second is of the spiritual part; of this speaks the second stanza, which follows; and of this we shall treat likewise, in the second and the third part, with respect to the activity of the soul; and in the fourth part, with respect to its passivity.<sup>1</sup>

This 'fourth part' is the *Dark Night*. Of it the Saint writes in a passage which follows that just quoted:

And the second night, or purification, pertains to those who are already proficient, occurring at the time when God desires to bring them to the state of union with God. And this latter night is a more obscure and dark and terrible purgation, as we shall say afterwards.<sup>2</sup>

In his three earlier books he has written of the Active Night, of Sense and of Spirit; he now proposes to deal with the Passive Night, in the same order. He has already taught us how we are to deny and purify ourselves with the ordinary help of grace, in order to prepare our senses and faculties for union with God through love. He now proceeds to explain, with an arresting freshness, how these same senses and faculties are purged and purified by God with a view to the same end—that of union. The combined description of the two nights completes the presentation of active and passive purgation, to which the Saint limits himself in these treatises, although the subject of the stanzas which he is glossing is a much wider one, comprising the whole of the mystical life and ending only with the Divine embraces of the soul transformed in God through love.

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent*, Bk. I, chap. i, § 2 (p. 18, above). Cf. p. 2, above.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, § 3 (p. 18, above).

The stanzas expounded by the Saint are taken from the same poem in the two treatises. The commentary upon the second, however, is very different from that upon the first, for it assumes a much more advanced state of development. The Active Night has left the senses and faculties well prepared, though not completely prepared, for the reception of Divine influences and illuminations in greater abundance than before. The Saint here postulates a principle of dogmatic theology—that by himself, and with the ordinary aid of grace, man cannot attain to that degree of purgation which is essential to his transformation in God. He needs Divine aid more abundantly. ‘However greatly the soul itself labours,’ writes the Saint, ‘it cannot actively purify itself so as to be in the least degree prepared for the Divine union of perfection of love, if God takes not its hand and purges it not in that dark fire.’<sup>1</sup>

The Passive Nights, in which it is God Who accomplishes the purgation, are based upon this incapacity. Souls ‘begin to enter’ this dark night

when God draws them forth from the state of beginners—which is the state of those that meditate on the spiritual road—and begins to set them in the state of progressives—which is that of those who are already contemplatives—to the end that, after passing through it, they may arrive at the state of the perfect, which is that of the Divine union of the soul with God.<sup>2</sup>

Before explaining the nature and effects of this Passive Night, the Saint touches, in passing, upon certain imperfections found in those who are about to enter it and which it removes by the process of purgation. Such travellers are still untried proficients, who have not yet acquired mature habits of spirituality and who therefore still conduct themselves as children. The imperfections are examined one by one, following the order of the seven deadly sins, in chapters (ii–viii) which once more reveal the author’s skill as a director of souls. They are easy chapters to understand, and of great practical utility, comparable to those in the first book of the *Ascent* which deal with the active purgation of the desires of sense.

In Chapter viii, St. John of the Cross begins to describe the Passive Night of the senses, the principal aim of which is the purgation or stripping of the soul of its imperfections and the preparation of it for fruitive union. The Passive Night of Sense, we are told, is ‘common’ and ‘comes to many,’ whereas that of Spirit ‘is the portion

*Dark Night*, Bk. I, chap. iii, § 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, Bk. I, chap. i, § 1.

of very few.'<sup>1</sup> The one is 'bitter and terrible' but 'the second bears no comparison with it,' for it is 'horrible and awful to the spirit.'<sup>2</sup> A good deal of literature on the former Night existed in the time of St. John of the Cross and he therefore promises to be brief in his treatment of it. Of the latter, on the other hand, he will 'treat more fully . . . since very little has been said of this, either in speech or in writing, and very little is known of it, even by experience.'<sup>3</sup>

Having described this Passive Night of Sense in Chapter viii, he explains with great insight and discernment how it may be recognized whether any given aridity is a result of this Night or whether it comes from sins or imperfections, or from frailty or lukewarmness of spirit, or even from indisposition or 'humours' of the body. The Saint is particularly effective here, and we may once more compare this chapter with a similar one in the *Ascent* (II, xiii)—that in which he fixes the point where the soul may abandon discursive meditation and enter the contemplation which belongs to loving and simple faith.

Both these chapters have contributed to the reputation of St. John of the Cross as a consummate spiritual master. And this not only for the objective value of his observations, but because, even in spite of himself, he betrays the sublimity of his own mystical experiences. Once more, too, we may admire the crystalline transparency of his teaching and the precision of the phrases in which he clothes it. To judge by his language alone, one might suppose at times that he is speaking of mathematical, rather than of spiritual operations.

In Chapter x, the Saint describes the discipline which the soul in this Dark Night must impose upon itself; this, as might be logically deduced from the *Ascent*, consists in 'allowing the soul to remain in peace and quietness,' content 'with a peaceful and loving attentiveness toward God.'<sup>4</sup> Before long it will experience enkindlings of love (Chapter xi), which will serve to purify its sins and imperfections and draw it gradually nearer to God; we have here, as it were, so many stages of the ascent of the Mount on whose summit the soul attains to transforming union. Chapters xii and xiii detail with great exactness the benefits that the soul receives from this aridity, while Chapter xiv briefly expounds the last line of the first stanza and brings to an end what the Saint desires to say with respect to the first Passive Night.

At only slightly greater length St. John of the Cross describes the Passive Night of the Spirit, which is at once more afflictive and

<sup>1</sup> *Dark Night*, Bk. I, chap. viii, § 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, Bk. I, chap. viii, § 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, Bk. I, chap. x, § 4.

more painful than those which have preceded it. This, nevertheless, is the Dark Night *par excellence*, of which the Saint speaks in these words: 'The night which we have called that of sense may and should be called a kind of correction and restraint of the desire rather than purgation. The reason is that all the imperfections and disorders of the sensual part have their strength and root in the spirit, where all habits, both good and bad, are brought into subjection, and thus, until these are purged, the rebellions and depravities of sense cannot be purged thoroughly.'<sup>1</sup>

Spiritual persons, we are told, do not enter the second night immediately after leaving the first; on the contrary, they generally pass a long time, even years, before doing so,<sup>2</sup> for they still have many imperfections, both habitual and actual (Chapter ii). After a brief introduction (Chapter iii), the Saint describes with some fullness the nature of this spiritual purgation or dark contemplation referred to in the first stanza of his poem and the varieties of pain and affliction caused by it, whether in the soul or in its faculties (Chapters iv-viii). These chapters are brilliant beyond all description; in them we seem to reach the culminating point of their author's mystical experience; any excerpt from them would do them an injustice. It must suffice to say that St. John of the Cross seldom again touches those same heights of sublimity.

Chapter ix describes how, although these purgations seem to blind the spirit, they do so only to enlighten it again with a brighter and intenser light, which it is preparing itself to receive with greater abundance. The following chapter makes the comparison between spiritual purgation and the log of wood which gradually becomes transformed through being immersed in fire and at last takes on the fire's own properties. The force with which the familiar similitude is driven home impresses indelibly upon the mind the fundamental concept of this most sublime of all purgations. Marvellous, indeed, are its effects, from the first enkindlings and burnings of Divine love, which are greater beyond comparison than those produced by the Night of Sense, the one being as different from the other as is the body from the soul. 'For this (latter) is an enkindling of spiritual love in the soul, which, in the midst of these dark confines, feels itself to be keenly and sharply wounded in strong Divine love, and to have a certain realization and foretaste of God.'<sup>3</sup> No less wonderful are the effects of the power-

<sup>1</sup> *Dark Night*, Bk. II, chap. iii, § 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, Bk. II, chap. i, § 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, Bk. II, chap. xi, § 1.

ful Divine illumination which from time to time enfolds the soul in the splendours of glory. When the effects of the light that wounds and yet illumines are combined with those of the enkindlement that melts the soul with its heat, the delights experienced are so great as to be ineffable.

The second line of the first stanza of the poem is expounded in three admirable chapters (xi–xiii), while one short chapter (xiv) suffices for the three lines remaining. We then embark upon the second stanza, which describes the soul's security in the Dark Night—due, among other reasons, to its being freed 'not only from itself, but likewise from its other enemies, which are the world and the devil.'<sup>1</sup>

This contemplation is not only dark, but also secret (Chapter xvii), and in Chapter xviii is compared to the 'staircase' of the poem. This comparison suggests to the Saint an exposition (Chapters xviii, xix) of the ten steps or degrees of love which comprise St. Bernard's mystical ladder. Chapter xxi describes the soul's 'disguise,' from which the book passes on (Chapters xxii, xxiii) to extol the 'happy chance' which led it to journey 'in darkness and concealment' from its enemies, both without and within.

Chapter xxiv glosses the last line of the second stanza—'my house being now at rest.' Both the higher and the lower 'portions of the soul' are now tranquillized and prepared for the desired union with the Spouse, a union which is the subject that the Saint proposed to treat in his commentary on the five remaining stanzas. As far as we know, this commentary was never written. We have only the briefest outline of what was to have been covered in the third, in which, following the same effective metaphor of night, the Saint describes the excellent properties of the spiritual night of infused contemplation, through which the soul journeys with no other guide or support, either outward or inward, than the Divine love 'which burned in my heart.'

It is difficult to express adequately the sense of loss that one feels at the premature truncation of this eloquent treatise.<sup>2</sup> We have already given our opinion<sup>3</sup> upon the commentaries thought to have been written on the final stanzas of the 'Dark Night.' Did we possess them, they would explain the birth of the light—'dawn's first breathings in the heav'ns above'—which breaks through the black darkness of the Active and the Passive Nights; they would tell us, too, of the soul's further progress towards the Sun's full brightness. It is true, of course, that some part of this great gap is filled by St. John of the Cross himself

<sup>1</sup> *Dark Night*, Bk. II, chap. xvi, § 2.

<sup>2</sup> [On this, see Sobrino, pp. 159–66.]

<sup>3</sup> Cf. pp. xlv–l, above.

in his other treatises, but it is small compensation for the incomplete state in which he left this edifice of such gigantic proportions that he should have given us other and smaller buildings of a somewhat similar kind. Admirable as are the *Spiritual Canticle* and the *Living Flame of Love*, they are not so completely knit into one whole as is this great double treatise. They lose both in flexibility and in substance through the closeness with which they follow the stanzas of which they are the exposition. In the *Ascent* and the *Dark Night*, on the other hand, we catch only the echoes of the poem, which are all but lost in the resonance of the philosopher's voice and the eloquent tones of the preacher. Nor have the other treatises the learning and the authority of these. Nowhere else does the genius of St. John of the Cross for infusing philosophy into his mystical dissertations find such an outlet as here. Nowhere else, again, is he quite so appealingly human; for, though he is human even in his loftiest and sublimest passages, this intermingling of philosophy with mystical theology makes him seem particularly so. These treatises are a wonderful illustration of the theological truth that grace, far from destroying nature, ennobles and dignifies it, and of the agreement always found between the natural and the supernatural—between the principles of sound reason and the sublimest manifestations of Divine grace.

### MANUSCRIPTS OF THE *DARK NIGHT*

The autograph of the *Dark Night*, like that of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, is unknown to us: the second seems to have disappeared in the same period as the first. There are extant, however, as many as twelve early copies of the *Dark Night*, some of which, though none of them is as palæographically accurate as the best copy of the *Ascent*, are very reliable; there is no trace in them of conscious adulteration of the original or of any kind of modification to fit the sense of any passage into a preconceived theory. We definitely prefer one of these copies to the others but we nowhere follow it so literally as to incorporate in our text its evident discrepancies from its original.

MS. 3,446. An early MS. in the clear masculine hand of an Andalusian: MS. 3,446 in the National Library, Madrid. Like many others, this MS. was transferred to the library from the Convento de San Hermenegildo at the time of the religious persecutions in the early nineteenth century; it had been presented to the Archives of the

Reform by the Fathers of Los Remedios, Seville—a Carmelite house founded by P. Gracián in 1574. It has no title and a fragment from the *Living Flame of Love* is bound up with it.

This MS. has only two omissions of any length; these form part respectively of Book II, Chapters xix and xxiii, dealing with the Passive Night of the Spirit. It has many copyist's errors. At the same time, its antiquity and origin, and the good faith of which it shows continual signs, give it, in our view, primacy over the other copies now to come under consideration. It must be made clear, nevertheless, that there is no extant copy of the *Dark Night* as trustworthy and as skilfully made as the Alcaudete MS. of the *Ascent*.

*MS. of the Carmelite Nuns of Toledo.* Written in three hands, all early. Save for a few slips of the copyist, it agrees with the foregoing; a few of its errors have been corrected. It bears no title, but has a long sub-title which is in effect a partial summary of the argument.

*MS. of the Carmelite Nuns of Valladolid.* This famous convent, which was one of St. Teresa's foundations, is very rich in Teresian autographs, and has also a number of important documents relating to St. John of the Cross, together with some copies of his works. That here described is written in a large, clear hand and probably dates from the end of the sixteenth century. It has a title similar to that of the last-named copy. With few exceptions it follows the other most important MSS.

*MS. Alba de Tormes.* What has been said of this in the introduction to the *Ascent* (pp. 5-6) applies also to the *Dark Night*. It is complete, save for small omissions on the part of the amanuensis, the 'Argument' at the beginning of the poem, the verses themselves and a few lines from Book II, Chapter vii.

*MS. 6,624.* As we have seen (p. 6), this copy is almost identical with the foregoing. It omits the 'Argument' and the poem itself but not the lines from Book II, Chapter vii.

*MS. 8,795.* This contains the *Dark Night*, *Spiritual Canticle*, *Living Flame of Love*, a number of poems by St. John of the Cross and the *Spiritual Colloquies between Christ and the soul His Bride*. It is written in various hands, all very early and some feminine. A note by P. Andrés de la Encarnación, on the reverse of the first folio, records that the copy was presented to the Archives of the Reform by the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Baeza. This convent was founded in 1589, two years before the Saint's death, and the copy may well date from about this

period. On the second folio comes the poem 'I entered in—I knew not where.' On the reverse of the third folio begins a kind of preface to the *Dark Night*, opening with the words: 'Begin the stanzas by means of which a soul may occupy itself and become fervent in the love of God. It deals with the Dark Night and is divided into two books. The first treats of the purgation of sense, and the second of the spiritual purgation of man. It was written by P. Fr. Juan de la Cruz, Discalced Carmelite.' On the next folio, a so-called 'Preface: To the Reader' begins: 'As a beginning and an explanation of these two purgations of the Dark Night which are to be expounded hereafter, this chapter will show how narrow is the path that leads to eternal life and how completely detached and disencumbered must be those that are to enter thereby.' This fundamental idea is developed for the space of two folios. There follows a sonnet on the *Dark Night*,<sup>1</sup> and immediately afterwards comes the text of the treatise.

The copy contains many errors, but its only omission is that of the last chapter. There is no trace in it of any attempt to modify its original; indeed, the very nature and number of the copyist's errors are a testimony to his good faith.

*MS* 12,658. A note by P. Andrés states that he acquired it in Madrid but has no more detailed recollection of its *provenance*. 'The *Dark Night*,' it adds, 'begins on folio 43; our holy father is described simply as "the second friar of the new Reformation,"<sup>2</sup> which is clear evidence of its antiquity.'

The Codex contains a number of opuscles, transcribed no doubt with a devotional aim by the copyist. Its epoch is probably the end of the sixteenth century; it is certainly earlier than the editions. There is no serious omission except that of six lines of the 'Argument.' The authors of the other works copied include St. Augustine, B. Juan de Ávila, P. Baltasar Álvarez and P. Tomás de Jesús.

The copies which remain to be described are all mutilated or abbreviated and can be disposed of briefly:

*MS*. 13,498. Cf. p. 6, above. This copy omits less of the *Dark Night* than of the *Ascent* but few pages are without their omissions. In one place a meticulous pair of scissors has removed the lower half of a folio on which the Saint deals with spiritual luxury.

<sup>1</sup> [It contains a series of paradoxical statements, after the style of those in *Ascent*, Bk. I, chap. xiii, and is of no great literary merit. P. Silverio reproduces it in Spanish on p. 302 (note) of his first volume.]

<sup>2</sup> The 'first friar' would be P. Antonio de Jesús (p. xviii, above), who was senior to St. John of the Cross in the Carmelite Order, though not in the Reform.

*MS. of the Carmelite Friars of Toledo.* Dates from early in the seventeenth century and has numerous omissions, especially in the chapters on the Passive Night of the Spirit. The date is given (in the same hand as that which copies the title) as 1618. This MS. also contains an opusculum by Suso and another entitled 'Brief compendium of the most eminent Christian perfection of P. Fr. Juan de la Cruz.'

*MS. 18,160.* Cf. p. 7, above. The copyist has treated the *Dark Night* little better than the *Ascent*; except from the first ten and the last three chapters, he omits freely.

*MS. 12,411.* Entitled by its copyist 'Spiritual Compendium,' this MS. contains several short works of devotion, including one by Ruysbroeck. Of St. John of the Cross's works it copies the *Spiritual Canticle* as well as the *Dark Night*; the latter is headed: 'Song of one soul alone.' It also contains a number of poems, some of them by the Saint, and many passages from St. Teresa. It is in several hands, all of the seventeenth century. The copy of the *Dark Night* is most unsatisfactory; there are omissions and abbreviations everywhere.

*MS. of the Carmelite Nuns of Pamplona.* Cf. p. 7, above. This MS. also omits and abbreviates continually, especially in the chapters on the Passive Night of Sense, which are reduced to a mere skeleton.

*Editio princeps.* This is much more faithful to its original in the *Dark Night* than in the *Ascent*. Both the passages suppressed<sup>1</sup> and the interpolations<sup>2</sup> are relatively few and unimportant. Modifications of phraseology are more frequent and alterations are also made with the aim of correcting hyperbaton. In the first book about thirty lines are suppressed; in the second, about ninety. All changes which are of any importance have been shown in the notes.

*The present edition.* We have given preference, as a general rule, to *MS. 3,446*, subjecting it, however, to a rigorous comparison with the other copies. Mention has already been made (pp. xlv-xlvii, above) of certain apparent anomalies and a certain lack of uniformity in the Saint's method of dividing his commentaries. This is nowhere more noticeable than in the *Dark Night*. Instead of dividing his treatise into books, each with its proper title, the Saint abandons this method and uses titles only occasionally. As this makes comprehension of his

<sup>1</sup> The longest of these are one of ten lines in Bk. I, chap. iv [in the original] and those of Bk. II, chaps. vii, viii, xii, xiii, which vary from eleven to twenty-three lines. Bk. II, chap. xxiii, has also considerable modifications.

<sup>2</sup> The chief interpolation is in Bk. I, chap. x.

argument the more difficult, we have adopted the divisions which were introduced by P. Salablanca and have been copied by successive editors.

M. Baruzi (*Bulletin Hispanique*, 1922, Vol. xxiv, pp. 18-40) complains that this division weighs down the spiritual rhythm of the treatise and interrupts its movement. We do not agree. In any case, we greatly prefer the gain of clarity, even if the rhythm occasionally halts, to the other alternative—the constant halting of the understanding. We have, of course, indicated every place where the title is taken from the *editio princeps* and was not the work of the author.

The following abbreviations are adopted in the footnotes:

A = MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Friars of Alba.

B = MS. 6,624 (National Library, Madrid).

Bz. = MS. 8,795 (N.L.M.).

C = MS. 13,498 (N.L.M.).

G = MS. 18,160 (N.L.M.).

H = MS. 3,446 (N.L.M.).

M = MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Toledo.

Mtr. = MS. 12,658.

P = MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Friars of Toledo.

V = MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Valladolid.

E.p. = *Editio princeps* (1618).

MS. 12,411 and the MS. of the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Pamplona are cited without abbreviations.

## DARK NIGHT<sup>1</sup>

*Exposition of the stanzas describing the method followed by the soul in its journey upon the spiritual road to the attainment of the perfect union of love with God, to the extent that is possible in this life. Likewise are described the properties<sup>2</sup> belonging to the soul that has attained to the said perfection, according as they are contained in the same stanzas.<sup>3</sup>*

### PROLOGUE<sup>4</sup>

**I**N this book are first set down all the stanzas which are to be expounded; afterwards, each of the stanzas is expounded separately, being set down before its exposition; and then each line is expounded separately and in turn, the line itself also being set down before the exposition. In the first two stanzas are expounded the effects of the two spiritual purgations: of the sensual part of man and of the spiritual part. In the other six are expounded various and wondrous effects of the spiritual illumination and union of love with God.

### STANZAS OF THE SOUL

1. **On a dark night, Kindled in love with yearnings—oh,  
happy chance!—  
I went forth without being observed, My house being now  
at rest.**
2. **In darkness and secure, By the secret ladder, disguised—oh,  
happy chance!—  
In darkness and in concealment, My house being now at  
rest.**
3. **In the happy night, In secret, when none saw me,  
Nor I beheld aught, Without light or guide, save that  
which burned in my heart.**

<sup>1</sup> This title is lacking in all the MSS. except Mtr. and P.

<sup>2</sup> C [incorrectly]: 'prosperities.'

<sup>3</sup> This sub-title is found in C, G, M, Mtr., which add some such words as 'by Fray Juan de la Cruz, Discalced Carmelite.' The *editio princeps* has both title and sub-title.

<sup>4</sup> So G, M. Bz. has 'Proem' and e.p. 'Argument.'

4. This light guided me More surely than the light of noonday  
To the place where he (well I knew who!) was awaiting me—  
A place where none appeared.
5. Oh, night that guided me, Oh, night more lovely than the  
dawn,  
Oh, night that joined Beloved with lover, Lover trans-  
formed in the Beloved!
6. Upon my flowery breast, Kept wholly for himself alone,  
There he stayed sleeping, and I caressed him, And the  
fanning of the cedars made a breeze.
7. The breeze blew from the turret As I parted his locks ;  
With his gentle hand he wounded my neck And caused all  
my senses to be suspended.
8. I remained, lost in oblivion ; My face I reclined on the  
Beloved.  
All ceased and I abandoned myself, Leaving my cares  
forgotten among the lilies.

Begins the exposition of the stanzas which treat of the way and manner which the soul follows upon the road of the union of love with God.<sup>1</sup>

Before we enter upon the exposition of these stanzas, it is well to understand here that the soul that utters them is now in the state of perfection, which is the union of love with God, having already passed through severe trials and straits, by means of spiritual exercise in the narrow way of eternal life whereof Our Saviour speaks in the Gospel, along which way the soul ordinarily passes in order to reach this high and happy union with God.<sup>2</sup> Since this road (as the Lord Himself says likewise) is so strait, and since there are so few that enter by it,<sup>3</sup> the soul considers it a great happiness and good chance to have

<sup>1</sup> Thus H, M and other authorities. Some (including H) add the author's name. Others omit the title. A, B have: 'Book the fifth of the Dark Night.' E.p. has: 'Exposition of the intent of the Stanzas.'

<sup>2</sup> Thus the Codices. E.p. and M read: 'along which the soul ordinarily passes in order to reach this high and Divine union with God.'

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew vii, 14.

passed along it to the said perfection of love, as it sings in this first stanza,<sup>1</sup> calling this strait road with full propriety 'dark night,' as will be explained hereafter in the lines of the said stanza. The soul, then, rejoicing at having passed along this narrow road whence so many blessings have come to it, speaks after this manner.

<sup>1</sup> Bz. : 'as it relates in this stanza.'



## BOOK THE FIRST

*Which treats of the Night of Sense.*<sup>1</sup>

### STANZA THE FIRST

**On a dark night, Kindled in love with yearnings—oh, happy chance!—**

**I went forth without being observed, My house being now at rest.**

### EXPOSITION

**I**N this first stanza the soul relates the way and manner which it followed in going forth, as to its affection, from itself and from all things, and in dying to them all and to itself, by means of true mortification, in order to attain to living the sweet and delectable life of love with God; and it says that this going forth from itself and from all things was a 'dark night,' by which, as will be explained hereafter, is here understood purgative contemplation, which causes passively<sup>2</sup> in the soul the negation of itself and of all things referred to above.

2. And this going forth it says here that it was able to accomplish in the strength and ardour which love for its Spouse gave to it for that purpose in the dark contemplation aforementioned. Herein it extols<sup>3</sup> the great happiness which it found in journeying to God through this night with such signal success that none of the three enemies, which are world, devil and flesh (who are they that ever impede<sup>4</sup> this road), could hinder it; inasmuch as the aforementioned night of purgative<sup>5</sup> contemplation lulled to sleep and mortified, in the house of its sensuality, all the passions and desires with respect to their mischievous desires and motions.<sup>6</sup>

The line, then, says:

### **On a dark night**

<sup>1</sup> The Codices all begin with the stanza. The title belongs to the e.p. only.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits 'passively.'

<sup>3</sup> V: 'desired to extol.'

<sup>4</sup> B, e.p.: 'disturb.'

<sup>5</sup> [More exactly: 'purificative.'] E.p.: 'purified.'

<sup>6</sup> Thus B, C, G, H, M, Mtr. The other authorities and e.p. have: 'with respect to their mischievous motions.'

## CHAPTER I

*Sets down the first line and begins to treat of the imperfections of beginners.*<sup>1</sup>

INTO this dark night souls begin to enter when God draws them forth from the state of beginners—which is the state of those that meditate on the spiritual road—and begins to set them in the state of progressives<sup>2</sup>—which is that of those who are already contemplatives—to the end that, after passing through it, they may arrive at the state of the perfect, which is that of the Divine union of the soul with God. Wherefore, to the end that we may the better understand and explain what night is this through which the soul passes, and for what cause God sets it therein, it will be well here to touch first of all upon certain characteristics of beginners (which, although we treat them with all possible brevity, will not fail to be of service likewise to the beginners themselves),<sup>3</sup> in order that, realizing the weakness of the state wherein they are, they may take courage, and may desire that God will bring them into this night, wherein the soul is strengthened and confirmed in the virtues, and made ready for the inestimable delights of the love of God. And, although we may tarry here for a time, it will not be for longer than is necessary, so that we may go on to speak at once of this dark night.

2. It must be known, then, that the soul, after it has been definitely converted to the service of God, is, as a rule, spiritually nurtured and caressed by God, even as is the tender child by its loving mother, who warms it with the heat of her bosom and nurtures it with sweet milk and soft and pleasant food, and carries it and caresses it in her arms; but, as the child grows bigger, the mother gradually ceases caressing it, and, hiding her tender love, puts bitter aloes upon her sweet breast, sets down the child<sup>4</sup> from her arms and makes it walk upon its feet, so that it may lose the habits of a child and betake itself to more important and substantial occupations. The loving mother is like the grace of God, for, as soon as the soul is regenerated by its new warmth and fervour for the service of God, He treats it in the same way; He makes

<sup>1</sup> From e.p.

<sup>2</sup> Thus [*aprovechantes*] A, B, C, E, G, H, Mtr. The other authorities, and e.p., read: *aprovechados* ['proficient.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits this parenthesis, which, however, is found in all the Codices, except C and E.

<sup>4</sup> E.p. modifies these lines of the Codices, thus: 'and, hiding her tender breast, puts bitter aloes upon it, sets down the child.'

it to find spiritual milk, sweet and delectable, in all the things of God, without any labour of its own, and also great pleasure in spiritual exercises, for here God is giving to it the breast of His tender love, even as to a tender child.

3. Therefore, such a soul finds its delight in spending long periods—perchance whole nights—in prayer; penances are its pleasures; fasts its joys; and its consolations are to make use of the sacraments and to occupy itself in Divine things. In the which things spiritual persons (though taking part in them with great efficacy and persistence and using and treating them with great care) often find themselves, spiritually speaking, very weak and imperfect. For since they are moved to these things and to these spiritual exercises by the consolation and pleasure that they find in them, and since, too, they have not been prepared for them by the practice of earnest striving in the virtues, they have many faults and imperfections with respect to these spiritual actions of theirs; for, after all, any man's actions correspond to the habit of perfection attained by him. And, as these persons have not had the opportunity of acquiring the said habits of strength, they have necessarily to work like feeble<sup>1</sup> children, feebly. In order that this may be seen more clearly, and likewise how much these beginners in the virtues lack<sup>2</sup> with respect to the works in which they so readily engage with the pleasure aforementioned, we shall describe it by reference to the seven capital sins, each in its turn, indicating some of the many imperfections which they have under each heading; wherein it will be clearly seen how like to children are these persons in all they do. And it will also be seen how many blessings the dark night of which we shall afterwards treat brings with it, since it cleanses the soul and purifies it from all these imperfections.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. and M omit 'feeble.'

<sup>2</sup> Thus B, G, H, Mtr., P, V. The other Codices and e.p. have: 'how feeble are these beginners in the virtues.'

## CHAPTER II

*Of certain spiritual imperfections which beginners have with respect to the habit of pride.*<sup>1</sup>

As these beginners feel themselves to be very fervent and diligent in spiritual things and devout exercises, from this prosperity<sup>2</sup> (although it is true that holy things of their own nature cause humility) there often comes to them, through their imperfections, a certain kind of secret pride, whence they come to have some degree of satisfaction with their works and with themselves. And hence there comes to them likewise a certain desire, which is somewhat vain, and at times very vain, to speak of spiritual things<sup>3</sup> in the presence of others, and sometimes even to teach such things rather than to learn them. They condemn others in their heart when they see that they have not the kind of devotion which they themselves desire; and sometimes they even say this in words, herein resembling the Pharisee, who boasted of himself, praising God for his own good works and despising the publican.<sup>4</sup>

2. In these persons the devil often increases the fervour that they have and the desire to perform these and other works more frequently, so that their pride and presumption may grow greater. For the devil knows quite well that all these works and virtues which they perform are not only valueless to them, but even become vices in them. And such a degree of evil are some of these persons wont to reach that they would have none appear good save themselves; and thus, in deed and word, whenever the opportunity occurs, they condemn them and slander them, beholding the mote in their brother's eye<sup>5</sup> and not considering the beam which is in their own;<sup>6</sup> they strain at another's gnat and themselves swallow a camel.<sup>7</sup>

3. Sometimes, too, when their spiritual masters, such as confessors and superiors, do not approve of their spirit and behaviour (for they are anxious that all they do shall be esteemed and praised), they consider that they do not understand them, or that, because they do not approve of this and comply with that, their confessors are themselves

<sup>1</sup> This title is found in e.p. and also in all the Codices.

<sup>2</sup> H, M: 'from this property.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'And hence there comes to them likewise a certain exceedingly vain desire to speak of spiritual things.'

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke xviii, 11-12.

<sup>6</sup> St. Matthew vii, 3.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'in another's eye.'

<sup>7</sup> St. Matthew xxiii, 24.

not spiritual. And so they immediately desire and contrive to find some one else who will fit in with their tastes; for as a rule they desire to speak of spiritual matters with those who they think will praise and esteem what they do, and they flee, as they would from death, from those who disabuse them in order to lead them into a safe road—sometimes they even harbour ill-will against them. Presuming thus,<sup>1</sup> they are wont to resolve much<sup>2</sup> and accomplish very little. Sometimes they are anxious that others shall realize how spiritual and devout they are, to which end they occasionally give outward evidence thereof in movements, sighs and other ceremonies; and at times they are apt to fall into<sup>3</sup> certain ecstasies, in public rather than in secret, wherein the devil aids them, and they are pleased that this should be noticed, and are often eager that it should be noticed more.<sup>4</sup>

4. Many such persons desire to be the favourites of their confessors and to become intimate with them<sup>5</sup>, as a result of which there beset them continual occasions of envy and disquiet.<sup>6</sup> They are too much embarrassed<sup>7</sup> to confess their sins nakedly, lest their confessors should think less of them, so they palliate them and make them appear less evil, and thus it is to excuse themselves rather than to accuse themselves that they go to confession. And sometimes they seek another confessor to tell the wrongs that they have done, so that their own confessor shall think they have done nothing wrong at all, but only good; and thus they always take pleasure in telling him what is good,<sup>8</sup> and sometimes in such terms as make it appear to be greater than it is rather than less, desiring that he may think them to be good, when it would be greater humility in them, as we shall say, to depreciate it, and to desire that<sup>9</sup> neither he nor anyone else should consider them of account.

5. Some of these beginners, too, make little of their faults, and at other times become over-sad when they see themselves fall into them, thinking themselves to have been saints already; and thus they become

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'Presuming.'] E.p. reads: 'Presuming upon themselves.'

<sup>2</sup> A, B abbreviate: '... who disabuse them in order to cause them fear. They are wont to resolve much.'

<sup>3</sup> The words 'they are apt to fall into' are found in e.p. alone.

<sup>4</sup> [The original merely has: 'and are often eager.'] E.p. modifies: 'that this about which they are so eager should be noticed.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'Many such desire to be intimate with their confessors.' H has: 'desire to preach [*predicar* for *preceder*] and to be intimate with their confessors,' which destroys the sense of the passage.

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'a thousand envies and inquietudes.']

<sup>7</sup> Bz.: 'They are ashamed.'

<sup>8</sup> A, B, M omit: 'and thus ... is good.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'and to say naught, so that ...'

angry and impatient with themselves, which is another imperfection. Often they beseech God, with great yearnings,<sup>1</sup> that He will take from them their imperfections and faults, but they do this that they may find themselves at peace, and may not be troubled by them, rather than for God's sake; not realizing that, if He should take their imperfections from them, they would probably become prouder and more presumptuous<sup>2</sup> still. They dislike praising others and love to be praised themselves; sometimes they seek out such praise. Herein they are like the foolish virgins, who, when their lamps could not be lit, sought oil from others.<sup>3</sup>

6. From these imperfections some souls go on to develop<sup>4</sup> many very grave ones, which do them great harm. But some have fewer and some more,<sup>5</sup> and some, only the first motions thereof or little beyond these; and there are hardly any such beginners who, at the time of these signs of fervour,<sup>6</sup> fall not into some of these errors.<sup>7</sup> But those who at this time are going on to perfection proceed very differently and with quite another temper of spirit; for they progress by means of humility and are greatly edified, not only thinking naught of their own affairs,<sup>8</sup> but having very little satisfaction with themselves; they consider all others as far better, and usually have a holy envy of them, and an eagerness to serve God as they do. For the greater is their fervour, and the more numerous are the works that they perform, and the greater is the pleasure that they take in them, as they progress in humility, the more do they realize how much God deserves of them, and how little is all that they do for His sake;<sup>9</sup> and thus, the more they do, the less are they satisfied. So much would they gladly do from charity and love for Him, that all they do seems to them naught; and so greatly are they importuned, occupied and absorbed<sup>10</sup> by this loving anxiety that they never notice what others do or do not; or if they do notice it, they always believe, as I say, that all others are far better than they themselves. Wherefore, holding themselves as of little worth, they are anxious that others too should thus hold them,<sup>11</sup> and should despise and depreciate that which they do. And further, if men should

<sup>1</sup> M, e.p. omit 'great.'

<sup>2</sup> M, e.p. omit: 'and more presumptuous.'

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew xxv, 8. [*Lit.*, 'who, having their lamps dead, sought oil from without.']

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to have.'] A, M omit this verb and read: 'go on to many...'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'and others more.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'these fervours.']

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'into something of this.']

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'their own works.'

<sup>9</sup> H omits: 'and how... His sake.'

<sup>10</sup> Bz. has 'fascinated' for 'absorbed.' E.p.: 'importuned and occupied.'

<sup>11</sup> A, B omit this clause [interrupting the sense of the passage].

praise and esteem them, they can in no wise believe what they say; it seems to them strange that anyone should say these good things of them.

7. Together with great tranquillity and humbleness, these souls have a deep desire to be taught by anyone who can bring them profit; they are the complete opposite of those of whom we have spoken above, who would fain be always teaching, and who, when others seem to be teaching them, take the words from their mouths as if they knew them already. These souls, on the other hand, being far from desiring to be the masters of any, are very ready to travel and set out on another road than that which they are actually following, if they be so commanded, because they never think that they are right in anything whatsoever. They rejoice when others are praised; they grieve only because they serve not God like them. They have no desire to speak of the things that they do, because they think so little of them that they are ashamed to speak of them even to their spiritual masters, since they seem to them to be things that merit not being spoken of. They are more anxious to speak of their faults and sins, or that these should be recognized rather than their virtues;<sup>1</sup> and thus they incline to talk of their souls with those who account<sup>2</sup> their actions and their spirituality of little value. This is a characteristic of the spirit which is simple, pure, genuine and very pleasing to God. For as the wise Spirit of God dwells in these humble souls, He moves them and inclines them to keep His treasures secretly within and likewise to cast out from themselves all evil. God gives this grace to the humble, together with the other virtues, even as He denies it to the proud.

8. These souls will give their heart's blood to anyone that serves God, and will help others to serve Him as much as in them lies. The imperfections into which they see themselves fall they bear with humility, meekness of spirit<sup>3</sup> and a loving fear of God, hoping in Him. But souls who in the beginning journey with this kind of perfection are, as I understand, and as has been said, a minority, and very few are those who we can be glad do not fall into the opposite errors. For this reason, as we shall afterwards say, God leads into the dark night those whom He desires to purify from all these imperfections so that He may bring them farther onward.

<sup>1</sup> M, e.p.: 'or that it should be recognized that these [faults and sins] are not virtues.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'esteem.'

<sup>3</sup> H: 'with humility, humility of spirit.'

## CHAPTER III

*Of some imperfections which some of these souls<sup>1</sup> are apt to have, with respect to the second capital sin, which is avarice,<sup>2</sup> in the spiritual sense.*

MANY of these beginners have also at times great spiritual avarice. They will be found to be discontented with the spirituality which God gives them; and they are very disconsolate and querulous because they find not in spiritual things the consolation that they would desire. Many can never have enough of listening to counsels and learning<sup>3</sup> spiritual precepts, and of possessing and reading many books which treat of this matter, and they spend their time on all these things rather than on works of mortification<sup>4</sup> and the perfecting<sup>5</sup> of the inward poverty of spirit which should be theirs. Furthermore, they burden themselves with images and rosaries which are very curious;<sup>6</sup> now they put down one, now take up another; now they change about, now change back again; now they want this kind of thing, now that, preferring one kind of cross to another, because it is more curious.<sup>7</sup> And others you will see adorned with agnusdeis<sup>8</sup> and relics and tokens,<sup>9</sup> like children with trinkets. Here I condemn the attachment of the heart, and the affection which they have for the nature, multitude and curiosity of these things, inasmuch as it is quite contrary to poverty of spirit, which considers only the substance of devotion, makes use only of what suffices for that end and grows weary of this other kind of multiplicity and curiosity. For true devotion must issue from the heart, and consists in the truth and

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'which some beginners.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz.: 'which is pride and boasting.'

<sup>3</sup> M, e.p. omit 'learning.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz., P insert here: 'and they have and read many spiritual books which treat of this vice and of gluttony, which generally lead them to attempt many kinds of exercise, either to make great use of their capital, from a craving for great profits or through mere pleasure and cupidity; whence comes inconstancy to them and lack of stability in their particular exercises, which are chiefly necessary in these beginnings; and this spoils their labour and makes it of none effect and vain, wasting their time in experiments and trials.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. reads: 'rather than on works, without the mortification and the perfecting.'

<sup>6</sup> So H, P. A, B, C, G, Mtr., V have: 'which are sometimes very curious and showy.' So Bz., but with 'costly' for 'showy.' M, e.p.: 'images and crosses which are very curious and costly.'

<sup>7</sup> Bz. adds: 'or costly.' Other authorities add: 'or valuable.'

<sup>8</sup> The *agnusdei* was a wax medal with a representation of the Lamb stamped upon it, often blessed by the Pope; at the time of the Saint such medals were greatly sought after, as we know from various references in St. Teresa's letters.

<sup>9</sup> [The word *nómina*, translated 'token,' and normally meaning 'list' or 'roll,' refers to a relic on which were written the names of saints. In modern Spanish it can denote a medal or amulet used superstitiously.]

substance<sup>1</sup> alone of what is represented by spiritual things; all the rest is affection and attachment proceeding from imperfection; and in order that one may pass to any kind of perfection<sup>2</sup> it is necessary for such desires to be killed.

2. I knew a person who for more than ten years made use of a cross roughly formed from a branch<sup>3</sup> that had been blessed, fastened with a pin twisted round it; he had never ceased using it, and he always carried it about with him until I took it from him; and this was a person of no small sense and understanding. And I saw another who said his prayers using beads that were made of bones from the spine of a fish; his devotion was certainly no less precious on that account in the sight of God, for it is clear that these things<sup>4</sup> carried no devotion in their workmanship or value. Those, then, who start from these beginnings and make good progress attach themselves to no visible instruments, nor do they burden themselves with such, nor desire to know more than is necessary in order that they may act well;<sup>5</sup> for they set their eyes only on being right with God and on pleasing Him, and therein consists their covetousness. And thus with great generosity they give away all that they have, and delight to know that they have it not, for God's sake and for charity to their neighbour,<sup>6</sup> no matter whether these be spiritual things or temporal. For, as I say, they set their eyes only upon the reality of interior<sup>7</sup> perfection, which is to give pleasure to God and in naught to give pleasure to themselves.

3. But neither from these imperfections nor from those others can the soul be perfectly purified until God brings it into the passive purgation of that dark night whereof we shall speak presently. It befits the soul, however, to contrive to labour, in so far as it can, on its own account, to the end that it may purge and perfect itself, and thus may merit being taken by God into that Divine care wherein it becomes healed of all things that it was unable of itself to cure. Because, however greatly the soul itself labours, it cannot<sup>8</sup> actively purify itself so as

<sup>1</sup> E.p. alone modifies thus: 'from the heart, in truth alone, and must consider only the truth and substance.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. alone has: 'pass to the estate of perfection.'

<sup>3</sup> [No doubt a branch of palm, olive or rosemary, blessed in church on Palm Sunday, like the English palm crosses of to-day. 'Palm Sunday' is in Spanish *Domingo de ramos*: 'Branch Sunday.']

<sup>4</sup> Thus e.p. alone. The other authorities have 'these.'

<sup>5</sup> M: 'neither do they desire to know much in order to act [well].' [The word 'well' does not occur anywhere in the original.]

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'and for charity to their neighbour, ruling everything by the laws of this virtue.'

<sup>7</sup> M, e.p. omit 'interior.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'it cannot by its industry.'

to be in the least degree prepared for the Divine union of perfection of love, if God takes not<sup>1</sup> its hand and purges it not in that dark fire, in the way and manner that we have to describe.<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

*Of other imperfections which these beginners are apt to have with respect to the third sin, which is luxury.<sup>3</sup>*

MANY of these beginners have many other imperfections than those which I am describing with respect to each of the deadly sins, but these I set aside, in order to avoid prolixity, touching upon a few of the most important, which are, as it were, the origin and cause<sup>4</sup> of the rest. And thus, with respect to this sin of luxury (leaving apart the falling of spiritual persons<sup>5</sup> into this sin, since my intent is to treat of the imperfections which have to be purged by the dark night), they have many imperfections which<sup>6</sup> might be described as spiritual luxury, not because they are so, but because the imperfections proceed from spiritual things. For it often comes to pass that, in their very spiritual exercises, when they are powerless to prevent it, there arise and assert themselves in the sensual part of the soul impure acts and motions,<sup>7</sup> and sometimes this happens even when the spirit is deep in prayer, or engaged in the Sacrament of Penance or in the Eucharist. These things are not, as I say, in their power; they proceed from one of three causes.<sup>8</sup>

2. The first cause from which they often proceed is the pleasure which human nature takes in spiritual things.<sup>9</sup> For when the spirit and the sense are pleased, every part of a man is moved by that pleasure<sup>10</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> M, e.p.: 'of love with God, if He takes not.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'in the manner that we have to describe'; M: 'in the manner that we have described.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'spiritually understood.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz.: 'origin and head.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'of spiritual persons.' [This is a better reading: the omission throws into relief the author's contrast between the actual commission of the deadly sin and the imperfections connected with it.]

<sup>6</sup> So e.p. The Codices read [more emphatically]: 'many imperfections, many which.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'in the sensual part of the soul unclean motions.' The edition of 1630 reads: 'not because this is so, but because at times it is felt and experienced in the flesh, by reason of its weakness, when the soul receives spiritual things. For it often comes to pass that, in their very spiritual exercises, when they are powerless to prevent it, there arise and are experienced in the sensual part of the soul unclean motions.'

<sup>8</sup> Thus most of the Codices. Others, and e.p., read: 'three things.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: '... occasionally proceed, albeit rarely and in weak natures, is from,' etc.

<sup>10</sup> [*Lit.*, 'recreation.']

delight according to its proportion<sup>1</sup> and nature. For then the spirit, which is the higher part, is moved to pleasure<sup>2</sup> and delight in God; and the sensual nature, which is the lower part, is moved to pleasure and delight of the senses, because it cannot possess and lay hold upon aught else, and it therefore lays hold upon that which comes nearest to itself, which is the impure and sensual.<sup>3</sup> Thus it comes to pass that the soul is in deep prayer with God according to the spirit, and, on the other hand, according to sense it is passively conscious, not without great displeasure, of rebellions and motions and acts of the senses,<sup>4</sup> which often happens in Communion, for when the soul receives joy and comfort in this act of love, because this Lord bestows it (since it is to that end that He gives Himself), the sensual nature takes that which is its own likewise, as we have said, after its manner. Now as, after all, these two parts are combined in one individual, they ordinarily both participate in that which one of them receives, each after its manner; for, as the philosopher says, everything that is received is in the recipient<sup>5</sup> after the manner of the same recipient. And thus, in these beginnings, and even when the soul has made some progress, its sensual part, being imperfect, oftentimes receives the Spirit of God with the same imperfection.<sup>6</sup> Now when this sensual part is renewed by the purgation of the dark night which we shall describe, it no longer has these weaknesses; for it is no longer this part that receives aught, but rather it is itself received into the Spirit. And thus it then has everything after the manner of the Spirit.<sup>7</sup>

3. The second cause whence these rebellions sometimes proceed is the devil, who, in order to disquiet<sup>8</sup> and disturb the soul, at times when it is at prayer or is striving to pray, contrives to stir up these motions of impurity in its nature; and if the soul gives heed to any of these, they cause it great harm. For through fear of these not only do persons

<sup>1</sup> So H, P. The other authorities [followed by P. Silverio] have 'portion.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'recreation.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'and it . . . and sensual.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. reads: 'Thus it comes to pass that the soul is in prayer with God according to the spirit, and, on the other hand, according to sense it is passively conscious, not without great displeasure, of rebellions and motions of the senses.' It then omits the following words: 'which often . . . after its manner.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'in the recipient.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'since its sensual part is imperfect, it occasionally partakes of spiritual pleasures with the same imperfection.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. expands thus: '. . . has these weaknesses; for so abundantly does it receive the Divine Spirit that it seems rather to be received into that same Spirit—into One, in brief, that is very much greater. And thus it possesses everything after the manner of the Spirit, in a wondrous way, in Whom it is a partaker, being united with God.'

<sup>8</sup> M, V: 'to disgust'; Mtr.: 'to retaliate.'

become lax in prayer—which is the aim of the devil when he begins to strive with them—but some give up prayer altogether, because they think that these things attack them more during that exercise than apart from it, which is true, since the devil attacks them then more than at other times, so that they may give up spiritual exercises. And not only so, but he succeeds in portraying to them very vividly things that are most foul and impure, and at times are very closely related to certain spiritual things and persons that are of profit to their souls, in order to terrify them and make them fearful;<sup>1</sup> so that those who are affected by this dare not even look at anything or meditate upon anything, because they immediately encounter this temptation. And upon those who are inclined to melancholy this acts with such effect<sup>2</sup> that they become greatly to be pitied since they are suffering so sadly; for this trial reaches such a point in certain persons, when they have this evil humour, that they believe it to be clear that the devil is ever present with them and that they have no power to prevent this, although some of these persons can prevent his attack by dint of great effort and labour.<sup>3</sup> When these impurities<sup>4</sup> attack such souls through the medium of melancholy, they are not as a rule freed from them until they have been cured of that kind of humour, unless the dark night has entered the soul, and rids them of all impurities, one after another.<sup>5</sup>

4. The third source whence these impure motions are apt to proceed in order to make war upon the soul is often the fear which such persons have conceived for these impure representations and motions. Something that they see or say or think brings them to their mind, and this makes them afraid, so that they suffer from them through no fault of their own.

5.<sup>6</sup> There are also certain souls of so tender and frail a nature that, when there comes to them some spiritual consolation or some grace in prayer, the spirit of luxury is with them immediately, inebriating<sup>7</sup> and delighting their sensual nature in such manner that it is as if they were plunged into the enjoyment and pleasure of this sin; and the enjoyment remains, together with the consolation, passively, and

<sup>1</sup> E.p. has 'make an end of them' [*acabarlas*] for 'make them fearful' [*acobardarlas*].

<sup>2</sup> So H. A, B, Bz., C, Mtr., P, V have: 'with such effect and frequency.' M, e.p.: 'with such effect and vehemence.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'since they are suffering . . . effort and labour.' C also omits these lines and a number of other passages in this chapter.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'these things.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'of everything.'] E.p.: 'and gradually purifies them altogether.'

<sup>6</sup> C omits most of this paragraph and e.p. omits it all.

<sup>7</sup> M has 'hinderling' [*embarga*] for 'inebriating' [*embriaga*].

sometimes they are able to see that certain impure and unruly acts have taken place. The reason for this is that, since these natures are, as I say, frail and tender, their humours are stirred up and their blood is excited at the least disturbance.<sup>1</sup> And hence come these motions; and the same thing happens to such souls when they are enkindled with anger or suffer any disturbance or grief.<sup>2</sup>

6. Sometimes, again, there arises within these spiritual persons, whether they be speaking or performing spiritual actions, a certain vigour and bravado, through their having regard to persons who are present, and before these persons they display a certain kind of vain gratification. This also arises from luxury of spirit, after the manner wherein we here understand it, which is accompanied as a rule<sup>3</sup> by complacency in the will.

7.<sup>4</sup> Some of these persons make friendships of a spiritual kind with others, which oftentimes arise from luxury and not from spirituality; this may be known to be the case when the remembrance of that friendship causes not the remembrance and love of God to grow, but occasions remorse of conscience. For, when the friendship is purely spiritual, the love of God grows with it; and the more the soul remembers it, the more it remembers the love of God, and the greater the desire it has for God; so that, as the one grows, the other grows also. For the spirit of God has this property, that it increases good by adding to it more good, inasmuch as there is likeness and conformity between them. But, when this love arises from the vice of sensuality aforementioned, it produces the contrary effects; for the more the one grows, the more the other decreases, and the remembrance of it likewise. If that sensual love grows, it will at once be observed that the soul's love of God is becoming colder, and that it is forgetting Him as it remembers that love; there comes to it, too, a certain remorse of conscience. And, on the other hand, if the love of God grows in the soul, that other love becomes cold and is forgotten; for, as the two are

<sup>1</sup> V: 'the least operation.'

<sup>2</sup> All writers who comment upon this delicate matter go into lengthy and learned explanations of it, though in reality there is little that needs to be added to the Saint's clear and apt exposition. It will be remembered that St. Teresa once wrote to her brother Lorenzo, who suffered in this way: 'As to those stirrings of sense. . . I am quite clear they are of no account, so the best thing is to make no account of them' (LL. 168). The most effective means of calming souls tormented by these favours is to commend them to a discreet and wise director whose counsel they may safely follow. The Illuminists committed the grossest errors in dealing with this matter.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. reads 'at times' for 'as a rule.'

<sup>4</sup> H, V insert here a sub-title: 'Rule for knowing the love which is with God and that which is not so.'

contrary to one another, not only does the one not aid the other, but the one which predominates quenches and confounds the other, and becomes strengthened in itself, as the philosophers say. Wherefore Our Saviour said in the Gospel: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'<sup>1</sup> That is to say, the love which is born of sensuality ends in sensuality, and that which is of the spirit ends in the spirit of God and causes it to grow. This is the difference that exists between these two kinds of love, whereby we may know them.

8. When the soul enters the dark night, it brings these kinds of love under control. It strengthens and purifies the one, namely that which is according to God; and the other it removes and brings to an end;<sup>2</sup> and in the beginning it causes both to be lost sight of, as we shall say hereafter.

## CHAPTER V

*Of the imperfections into which beginners fall with respect to the sin of wrath.*

BY reason of the concupiscence which many beginners have for spiritual consolations, their experience of these consolations is very commonly accompanied by many imperfections proceeding from the sin of wrath; for, when their delight and pleasure in spiritual things come to an end, they naturally become embittered,<sup>3</sup> and bear that lack of sweetness which they have to suffer with a bad grace, which affects all that they do; and they very easily become irritated over the smallest matter—sometimes, indeed, none can tolerate them. This frequently happens after they have been very pleasantly recollected in prayer according to sense; when their pleasure and delight therein come to an end, their nature is naturally vexed and disappointed, just as is the child when they take it from the breast of which it was enjoying the sweetness. There is no sin in this natural vexation,<sup>4</sup> when it is not permitted to indulge itself, but only imperfection, which must be purged by the aridity and severity of the dark night.

2. There are other of these spiritual persons, again, who fall into

<sup>1</sup> St. John iii, 6.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'removes, brings to an end or mortifies.'

<sup>3</sup> [*desabridos*. Cf. note on *sinsabor*, p. 280, above.]

<sup>4</sup> M: 'natural disillusion.'

another kind of spiritual wrath: this happens when they become irritated at the sins of others, and keep watch on those others with a sort of uneasy zeal. At times the impulse comes to them to reprove them angrily, and occasionally they go so far as to indulge it<sup>1</sup> and set themselves up as masters of virtue. All this is contrary to spiritual meekness.

3. There are others who are vexed with themselves when they observe their own imperfectness,<sup>2</sup> and display an impatience that is not humility; so impatient are they about this that they would fain be saints in a day. Many of these persons purpose to accomplish a great deal and make grand<sup>3</sup> resolutions; yet, as they are not humble and have no misgivings about themselves,<sup>4</sup> the more resolutions they make, the greater is their fall and the greater their annoyance, since they have not the patience to wait for that which God will give them when it pleases Him; this likewise is contrary to the spiritual meekness<sup>5</sup> aforementioned, which cannot be wholly remedied save by the purgation of the dark night. Some souls, on the other hand, are so patient<sup>6</sup> as regards the progress which they desire that God would gladly see them less so.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Of imperfections with respect to spiritual gluttony.*

WITH respect to the fourth sin, which is spiritual gluttony, there is much to be said, for there is scarce one of these beginners who, however satisfactory his progress, falls not into some of the many imperfections which come to these beginners with respect to this sin, on account of the sweetness which they find at first in spiritual exercises. For many of these, lured by the sweetness and pleasure which they find in such exercises, strive more after spiritual sweetness than after spiritual purity and discretion,<sup>7</sup> which is

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'they even do it.' E.p.: 'they even carry it out.'

<sup>2</sup> M: 'impatience' for 'imperfectness.'

<sup>3</sup> Some Codices read: 'make many.'

<sup>4</sup> So A, G, H, M, Mtr. The other authorities read: 'nor trust in themselves' [*confian* for *desconfian*].

<sup>5</sup> All the MSS. have 'meekness.' H reads 'dishonour,' which a corrector has altered to 'misgivings' [*desconfianza*].

<sup>6</sup> E.p. adds: 'and travel so slowly.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'than after true devotion and purity.'

that which God regards and accepts throughout the spiritual journey.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, besides the imperfections into which the seeking for sweetness of this kind makes them fall, the gluttony which they now have makes them continually go to extremes, so that they pass beyond the limits of moderation within which the virtues are acquired and wherein they have their being. For some of these persons, attracted by the pleasure which they find therein, kill themselves with penances, and others weaken themselves with fasts, by performing more than their frailty can bear, without the order or advice of any,<sup>2</sup> but rather endeavouring to avoid those whom they should obey in these matters; some, indeed, dare to do these things even though the contrary has been commanded them.

2. These persons are most imperfect and unreasonable; for they set bodily penance before subjection and obedience, which is penance according to reason and discretion, and therefore a sacrifice more acceptable and pleasing to God than any other. But such one-sided penance is no more than the penance of beasts, to which they are attracted, exactly like beasts, by the desire and pleasure which they find therein.<sup>3</sup> Inasmuch as all extremes are vicious, and as in behaving thus such persons<sup>4</sup> are working their own will, they grow in vice rather than in virtue; for, to say the least, they are acquiring spiritual gluttony and pride in this way, through not walking in obedience. And many of these the devil assails,<sup>5</sup> stirring up this gluttony in them through the pleasures and desires which he increases within them, to such an extent that, since they can no longer help themselves, they either change or vary or add to that which is commanded them, as any obedience in this respect is so bitter<sup>6</sup> to them. To such an evil pass have some persons come that, simply because it is through obedience that they engage in these exercises, they lose the desire and devotion to perform them, their only desire and pleasure being to do what they themselves are inclined to do,<sup>7</sup> so that it would probably be more profitable for them not to engage in these exercises at all.

3. You will find that many of these persons are very insistent with their spiritual masters to be granted that which they desire, extracting it from them almost by force; if they be refused it they become as

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'spiritual road.']

<sup>2</sup> A, P: 'without any order or advice.' II: 'without order and advice.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. softens thus: 'Such one-sided penance is most imperfect, for they are attracted thereto only by the desire and pleasure which they find therein.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'these persons.' M, e.p.: 'all persons.']

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'the devil deceives.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'so severe and bitter.'

<sup>7</sup> C, G, Mtr., V add: 'and not because it is commanded them.'

peevish as children and go about in great displeasure, thinking that they are not serving God when they are not allowed to do that which they would. For they go about clinging to their own will and pleasure, which they treat as though it came from God;<sup>1</sup> and immediately their directors<sup>2</sup> take it from them, and try to subject them to the will of God, they become peevish, grow faint-hearted and fall away. These persons think that their own satisfaction and pleasure are the satisfaction and service of God.

4. There are others, again, who, because of this gluttony, know so little of their own unworthiness and misery and have thrust so far from them the loving fear and reverence which they owe to the greatness of God, that they hesitate not to insist continually that their confessors shall allow them to communicate<sup>3</sup> often. And, what is worse, they frequently dare to communicate without the leave and consent<sup>4</sup> of the minister and steward of Christ, merely acting on their own opinion, and contriving to conceal the truth from him. And for this reason, because they desire to communicate continually, they make their confessions<sup>5</sup> carelessly,<sup>6</sup> being more eager to eat than to eat cleanly and perfectly, although it would be healthier and holier for them had they the contrary inclination and begged their confessors not to command them to approach the altar so frequently: between these two extremes, however, the better way is that of humble resignation. But the boldness referred to is<sup>7</sup> a thing that does great harm, and men may fear to be punished for such temerity.

5. These persons, in communicating, strive with every nerve to obtain some kind of sensible sweetness and pleasure, instead of humbly doing reverence and giving praise within themselves to God. And in such wise do they devote themselves to this that, when they have received no pleasure or sweetness in the senses, they think that they have accomplished nothing at all. This is to judge God very unworthily; they have not realized that the least of the benefits which come from this Most Holy Sacrament is that which concerns the senses; and that the invisible part of the grace that it bestows is much greater; for, in order that they may look at it with the eyes of faith, God oftentimes withholds from them these other consolations and sweetnesses of

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and treat this as their God.'] This e.p. omits [softening the sense of the whole, as above (p. 344)].

<sup>2</sup> [The Spanish is impersonal: 'immediately this is taken from them,' etc.]

<sup>3</sup> G, M, e.p.: 'to confess and communicate.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and opinion.']

<sup>5</sup> H erroneously reads: 'their passions.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'anyhow.']

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the other boldnesses are.'] A, e.p. read: 'the excessive boldnesses are.'

sense.<sup>1</sup> And thus they desire to feel and taste God as though He were comprehensible by them and accessible to them, not only in this, but likewise in other spiritual practices. All this is very great imperfection and completely opposed to the nature of God, since it is impurity in faith.<sup>2</sup>

6. These persons have the same defect as regards the practice of prayer, for they think that all the business of prayer consists in experiencing sensible pleasure and devotion and they strive to obtain this by great effort,<sup>3</sup> wearying and fatiguing their faculties and their heads; and when they have not found this pleasure they become greatly discouraged, thinking that they have accomplished nothing. Through these efforts they lose true devotion and spirituality, which consist in perseverance, together with patience and humility, and mistrust of themselves, that they may please God alone. For this reason, when they have once failed to find pleasure in this or some other exercise, they have great disinclination and repugnance to return to it, and at times they abandon it. They are, in fact, as we have said, like children, who are not influenced by reason, and who act, not from rational motives, but from inclination.<sup>4</sup> Such persons expend all their effort in seeking spiritual pleasure and consolation; they never tire, therefore, of reading books; and they begin, now one meditation, now another, in their pursuit of this pleasure which they desire to experience in the things of God. But God, very justly, wisely and lovingly, denies it to them, for otherwise this spiritual gluttony and inordinate appetite would breed innumerable evils. It is, therefore, very fitting that they should enter into the dark night, whereof we shall speak,<sup>5</sup> that they may be purged from this childishness.

7. These persons who are thus inclined to such pleasures have another very great imperfection, which is that they are very weak and remiss in journeying upon the hard<sup>6</sup> road of the Cross; for the soul that is given to sweetness naturally has its face set against all self-denial, which is devoid of sweetness.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M, e.p.: 'and favours of sense.' [The difference, in a Spanish MS., between *sabores* and *favores* would be of the slightest.]

<sup>2</sup> So the MSS. E.p. modifies the last clause and reads: 'Who demands the purest faith.'

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'they strive to obtain this, as they say, by the strength of their arms.' The phrase is, of course, understood in the Spanish to be metaphorical, as the words 'as they say' clearly indicate.]

<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'who are not influenced, neither act by reason, but from pleasure.']

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'which we shall give.' E.p. omits: 'whereof we shall speak.' A, G, V: 'which we shall describe.']

<sup>6</sup> [*despero*: harsh, rough, rugged.]

<sup>7</sup> [Lit., 'against all the sweetnessness of self-denial.']

8. These persons have many other imperfections which arise hence, of which in time the Lord heals them by means of temptations, aridities and other trials, all of which are part of the dark night. All these I will not treat further here, lest I become too lengthy; I will only say that spiritual temperance and sobriety lead to another and a very different temper, which is that of mortification, fear and submission in all things. It thus becomes clear that the perfection and worth of things consist not in the multitude and the pleasantness of one's actions,<sup>1</sup> but in being able to deny oneself in them; this such persons must endeavour to compass, in so far as they may, until God is pleased to purify them indeed, by bringing them<sup>2</sup> into the dark night, to arrive at which I am hastening on with my account of these imperfections.

## CHAPTER VII

### *Of imperfections with respect to spiritual envy and sloth.*<sup>3</sup>

WITH respect likewise to the other two vices, which are spiritual envy and sloth, these beginners fail not to have many imperfections. For, with respect to envy, many of them are wont to experience movements<sup>4</sup> of displeasure at the spiritual good of others, which cause them a certain sensible grief at being outstripped upon this road, so that they would prefer not to hear others praised; for they become displeased at others' virtues and sometimes they cannot refrain from contradicting what is said in praise of them, depreciating it as far as they can; and their annoyance thereat grows<sup>5</sup> because the same<sup>6</sup> is not said of them, for they would fain be preferred in everything. All this is clean contrary to charity, which, as Saint Paul says, rejoices in goodness.<sup>7</sup> And, if charity has any envy, it is a holy envy, comprising grief at not having the virtues of others, yet also joy because others have them, and delight when others outstrip us in the service of God, wherein we ourselves are so remiss.

<sup>1</sup> Bz., M: 'of one's things.' E.p. abbreviates: 'in the multitude of one's actions.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'causing them to enter.'] Bz.: 'putting them.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz., H omit: 'and sloth.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz. qualifies with 'many.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and, as they say, their eye (*el ojo*) grows'—a colloquial phrase expressing annoyance.] E.p. omits this phrase altogether. Bz., G read *enojo* for *el ojo* [destroying the metaphor but not altering the sense of this translation.]

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'and they greatly regret that the same.'

<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 6. The Saint here cites the sense, not the letter, of the epistle. B, H give the quotation correctly, as 'rejoiceth in the truth.'

2. With respect also to spiritual sloth, beginners are apt to be irked by the things that are most spiritual, from which they flee because these things are incompatible with sensible pleasure. For, as they are so much accustomed to sweetness in spiritual things, they are wearied by things in which they find no sweetness. If once they failed to find in prayer the satisfaction which their taste required (and after all it is well that God should take it from them to prove them), they would prefer not to return to it: sometimes they leave it; at other times they continue it unwillingly. And thus because of this sloth they abandon the way of perfection (which is the way of the negation of their will and pleasure for God's sake) for the pleasure and sweetness of their own will, which they aim at satisfying in this way rather than the will of God.

3. And many of these would have God will that which they themselves will, and are fretful at having to will that which He wills, and find it repugnant to accommodate their will to that of God.<sup>1</sup> Hence it happens to them that oftentimes they think that that wherein they find not their own will and pleasure is not the will of God; and that, on the other hand, when they themselves find satisfaction, God is satisfied. Thus they measure God by themselves and not themselves by God, acting quite contrarily to that which He Himself taught in the Gospel, saying: That he who should lose his will for His sake, the same should gain it; and he who should desire to gain it, the same should lose it.<sup>2</sup>

4. These persons likewise find it irksome when they are commanded to do that wherein they take no pleasure. Because they aim at spiritual sweetness and consolation, they are too weak to have the fortitude and bear the trials of perfection.<sup>3</sup> They resemble those who are softly nurtured and who run fretfully away from everything that is hard, and take offence at the Cross, wherein consist the delights of the spirit. The more spiritual a thing is, the more irksome they find it, for, as they seek to go about spiritual matters with complete freedom and according to the inclination of their will, it causes them great sorrow and repugnance to enter upon the narrow way, which, says Christ, is the way of life.<sup>4</sup>

5. Let it suffice here to have described these imperfections, among the many to be found in the lives of those that are in this first state of beginners, so that it may be seen how greatly they need God to set them in the state of proficients. This He does by bringing them into

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'to the Divine will.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew xvi, 25.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'they are very weak for the fortitude and trial of perfection.']

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew vii, 14.

the dark night whereof we now speak; wherein He weans them from the breasts of these sweetnesses and pleasures, gives them pure aridities and inward darkness, takes from them all these irrelevances<sup>1</sup> and puerilities, and by very different means causes them to win the virtues. For, however assiduously the beginner practises the mortification in himself of all these actions and passions of his, he can never completely succeed—very far from it—until God shall work it in him passively by means of the purgation of the said night. Of this I would fain speak in some way that may be profitable; may God, then, be pleased to give me His Divine light, because this is very needful in a night that is so dark and a matter that is so difficult<sup>2</sup> to describe and to expound.

The line, then, is:

**In a dark night.**

## CHAPTER VIII

*Wherein is expounded the first line of the first stanza, and a beginning is made of the explanation of this dark night.*<sup>3</sup>

**T**HIS night, which, as we say, is contemplation, produces in spiritual persons two kinds of darkness or purgation, corresponding to the two parts of man's nature—namely, the sensual and the spiritual. And thus the one night or purgation will be sensual, wherein the soul is purged according to sense, which is subdued to the spirit; and the other is a night or purgation which is spiritual, wherein the soul is purged and stripped<sup>4</sup> according to the spirit, and subdued and made ready for the union of love with God. The night of sense is common and comes to many: these are the beginners; and of this night<sup>5</sup> we shall speak first. The night of the spirit is the portion of very few, and these are they that are already practised and proficient, of whom we shall treat hereafter.

2. The first purgation or night is bitter and terrible to sense, as we shall now show.<sup>6</sup> The second bears no comparison with it, for it is

<sup>1</sup> M, P, e.p.: 'all these imperfections.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. and a number of MSS. omit all that follows the word 'difficult.'

<sup>3</sup> The title is taken from e.p. The Codices have no title.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'wherein a soul is purged or stripped.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'of whom.'

<sup>6</sup> [Lit., 'say.']

horrible and awful<sup>1</sup> to the spirit, as we shall show<sup>2</sup> presently. Since the night of sense is first in order and comes first, we shall first of all<sup>3</sup> say something about it briefly, since more is written of it, as of a thing that is more common; and we shall pass on to treat more fully of the spiritual night, since very little has been said of this, either in speech<sup>4</sup> or in writing, and very little<sup>5</sup> is known of it, even by experience.

3. Since, then, the conduct of these beginners upon the way of God is ignoble,<sup>6</sup> and has much to do with their love of self and their own inclinations, as has been explained above, God desires to lead them farther. He seeks to bring them out of that ignoble kind of love to a higher degree of love for Him, to free them from the ignoble exercises of sense and meditation (wherewith, as we have said, they go seeking God so unworthily and in so many ways that are unbefitting), and to lead them to a kind of spiritual exercise wherein they can commune with Him more abundantly and are freed more completely from imperfections. For they have now had practice for some time in the way of virtue and have persevered in meditation and prayer, whereby, through the sweetness and pleasure that they have found therein, they have lost their love of the things of the world and have gained some degree of spiritual strength in God; this has enabled them to some extent to refrain from creature desires, so that for God's sake they are now able to suffer a light burden and a little aridity without turning back to a time<sup>7</sup> which they found more pleasant. When they are going about these spiritual exercises with the greatest delight and pleasure, and when they believe that the sun of Divine favour is shining most brightly upon them, God turns all this light of theirs into darkness, and shuts against them the door and the source of the sweet spiritual water which they were tasting in God whensoever and for as long as they desired. (For, as they were weak and tender, there was no door closed to them, as Saint John says in the Apocalypse, iii, 8). And thus He leaves them so completely in the dark that they know not whither to go with their sensible imagination and meditation; for they cannot<sup>8</sup> advance a step in meditation, as they were wont to do aforetime, their

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'for it is very awful.'

<sup>2</sup> [Lit., 'say.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'first of all.'

<sup>4</sup> [*plática*: the word is frequently used in Spanish to denote an informal sermon or address.]

<sup>5</sup> This 'very little' [which in the original comes in the emphatic final position] is omitted in e.p.

<sup>6</sup> [Lit., 'low'; the same word recurs below and is similarly translated.]

<sup>7</sup> [Lit., 'to the better time.']

<sup>8</sup> M, e.p.: 'for they know not how to.'

inward senses being submerged in this night, and left with such dryness that not only do they experience no pleasure and consolation in the spiritual things and good exercises wherein they were wont to find their delights and pleasures, but instead, on the contrary, they find insipidity and bitterness in the said things. For, as I have said, God now sees that they have grown a little, and are becoming strong enough to lay aside their swaddling clothes and be taken from the gentle breast; so He sets them down from His arms and teaches them to<sup>1</sup> walk on their own feet; which they feel to be very strange, for everything seems to be going wrong with them.

4. To recollected persons this commonly happens sooner after their beginnings than to others, inasmuch as they are freer from occasions of backsliding, and their desires turn more quickly from the things of the world, which is necessary if they are to begin to enter this blessed<sup>2</sup> night of sense. Ordinarily no great time passes after their beginnings before they begin to enter this night of sense; and the great majority of them do in fact enter it, for they will generally be seen to fall into these aridities.

5. With regard to this way of purgation of the senses, since it is so common, we might here adduce a great number of quotations from Divine Scripture, where many passages relating to it are continually found, particularly in the Psalms and the Prophets. However, I do not wish to spend time upon these, for he who knows not how to look for them there will find the common experience of this purgation to be sufficient.<sup>3</sup>

## CHAPTER IX

*Of the signs by which it will be known that the spiritual person is walking along the way of this night and purgation of sense.*

**B**UT since these aridities might frequently proceed, not from the night and purgation of the sensual desires aforementioned, but from sins and imperfections, or from weakness and lukewarmness, or from some bad humour or indisposition of the body, I shall here set down certain signs by which it may be known if such aridity

<sup>1</sup> M, e.p.: 'and shows them how to.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. has 'happy' for 'blessed.'

<sup>3</sup> C, e.p. omit this entire sentence, substituting: 'And, to avoid prolixity, we omit them, albeit we shall adduce certain of them later.'

proceeds from the aforementioned purgation, or if it arises from any of the aforementioned sins. For the making of this distinction I find that there are three principal signs.

2. The first is whether, when a soul finds no pleasure or consolation in the things of God, it also fails to find it in any thing created; for, as God sets the soul in this dark night to the end that He may quench and purge its sensual desire, He allows it not to find attraction or sweetness in anything whatsoever. In such a case it may be considered very probable<sup>1</sup> that this aridity and insipidity proceed not from recently committed sins or imperfections. For, if this were so, the soul would feel in its nature some inclination or desire to taste other things than those of God; since, whenever the desire is allowed indulgence in any imperfection, it immediately feels inclined thereto, whether little or much, in proportion to the pleasure and the love that it has put into it. Since, however, this lack of enjoyment in things above or below might proceed from some indisposition or melancholy humour, which oftentimes makes it impossible for the soul to take pleasure in anything, it becomes necessary to apply the second sign and condition.

3. The second sign whereby a man may believe himself to be experiencing the said purgation<sup>2</sup> is that the memory is ordinarily centred upon God, with painful care and solicitude, thinking that it is not serving God, but is backsliding, because it finds itself without sweetness in the things of God. And in such a case it is evident that this lack of sweetness and this aridity come not from weakness and lukewarmness; for it is the nature of lukewarmness not to care greatly or to have any inward solicitude for the things of God. There is thus a great difference between aridity and lukewarmness, for lukewarmness consists in great weakness and remissness in the will and in the spirit, without solicitude as to serving God; whereas purgative aridity is ordinarily accompanied by solicitude, with care and grief, as I say, because the soul is not serving God. And, although this may sometimes be increased by melancholy or some other humour (as it frequently is), it fails not for that reason to produce a purgative effect upon the desire, since the desire is deprived of all pleasure,<sup>3</sup> and has its care centred upon God alone. For, when mere humour is the cause, it spends itself in displeasure and ruin of the physical nature, and there are none of those desires to serve God which belong to purgative

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'And in this it is known very probably.' E.p. omits 'very.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'The second sign and condition of this purgation.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'since it is completely purged as to [its] pleasure.'

aridity. When the cause is aridity, it is true that the sensual part of the soul has fallen low, and is weak and feeble in its actions, by reason of the little pleasure which it finds in them; but the spirit, on the other hand, is ready and strong.

4. For the cause of this aridity is that God transfers to the spirit the good things and the strength of the senses, which, since the soul's natural strength and senses are incapable of using them, remain barren, dry and empty. For the sensual part of a man has no capacity for that which is pure spirit, and thus, when it is the spirit that receives the pleasure, the flesh is left without savour and is too weak to perform any action. But the spirit, which all the time is being fed, goes forward in strength, and with more alertness and solicitude than before, in its anxiety not to fail God; and if it is not immediately conscious of spiritual sweetness and delight, but only of aridity and lack of sweetness, the reason for this is the strangeness of the exchange; for its palate has been accustomed to those other sensual pleasures upon which its eyes are still fixed, and, since the spiritual palate is not made ready or purged for such subtle pleasure, until it finds itself becoming prepared for it by means of this arid and dark night, it cannot experience spiritual pleasure and good, but only aridity and lack of sweetness, since it misses the pleasure which aforetime it enjoyed so readily.

5. These souls whom God is beginning to lead through these solitary places of the wilderness are like to the children of Israel, to whom in the wilderness God began to give food from Heaven, containing within itself all sweetness, and, as is there said,<sup>1</sup> it turned to the savour which each one of them desired. But withal the children of Israel felt the lack of the pleasures and delights of the flesh and the onions which they had eaten aforetime in Egypt, the more so because their palate was accustomed to these and took delight in them, rather than in the delicate sweetness of the angelic manna; and they wept and sighed for the fleshpots even in the midst of the food of Heaven.<sup>2</sup> To such depths does the vileness of our desires descend that it makes us to long for our own wretched food<sup>3</sup> and to be nauseated by the indescribable<sup>4</sup> blessings of Heaven.

6. But, as I say, when these aridities proceed from the way of the purgation of sensual desire, although at first the spirit feels no sweetness, for the reasons that we have just given, it feels that it is deriving

<sup>1</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'God began to give such delicious food from Heaven that, as is there said.'

<sup>2</sup> Numbers xi, 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'makes us to desire our miseries.']

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'incommunicable.'] E.p. has 'incommutable.'

strength and energy to act from the substance which this inward food gives it, the which food is the beginning of a contemplation that is dark and arid to the senses; which contemplation is secret and hidden from the very person that experiences it; and ordinarily, together with the aridity and emptiness which it causes in the senses, it gives the soul an inclination and desire to be alone and in quietness, without being able to think of any particular thing or having the desire to do so. If those souls to whom this comes to pass knew how to be quiet at this time, and troubled not about performing any kind of action, whether inward or outward, neither had any anxiety about doing anything,<sup>1</sup> then they would delicately experience this inward refreshment in that ease and freedom from care. So delicate is this refreshment that ordinarily, if a man have desire or care<sup>2</sup> to experience it, he experiences it not; for, as I say, it does its work when the soul is most at ease and freest from care; it is like the air which, if one would close one's hand upon it, escapes.

7. In this sense we may understand that which the Spouse said to the Bride in the Songs, namely: 'Withdraw thine eyes from me, for they make me to soar aloft.'<sup>3</sup> For in such a way does God bring the soul into this state, and by so different a path does He lead it that, if it desires to work with its faculties,<sup>4</sup> it hinders the work which God is doing in it rather than aids it; whereas aforetime it was quite the contrary. The reason is that, in this state of contemplation, which the soul enters when it forsakes meditation for the state of the proficient, it is God Who is now working in the soul; He binds<sup>5</sup> its interior faculties, and allows it not to cling to the understanding, nor to have delight in the will, nor to reason with the memory. For anything that the soul can do of its own accord at this time serves only, as we have said, to hinder inward peace and the work which God is accomplishing in the spirit by means of that aridity of sense. And this peace, being spiritual and delicate, performs a work which is quiet and delicate, solitary, productive of peace and satisfaction<sup>6</sup> and far removed from all those

<sup>1</sup> E.p. reads: '... [outward], which they strive with their labour and their reasoning to perform, and had no anxiety to do anything save to allow themselves to be led by God, to receive and to listen with loving interior attentiveness, then ...' etc.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'if a man have superadded and particular desire and care.'

<sup>3</sup> Canticles vi, 4 [A.V., vi, 5].

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'that, if it will work of itself and by its own ability.'

<sup>5</sup> Nearly all authorities read thus. M, e.p., however, have: 'He seems to bind,' and V: 'He veils.'

<sup>6</sup> [Lit., 'satisfactory and pacific.' E.p. omits: 'solitary, productive of ... satisfaction.' H has 'solicitous' for 'solitary.' C omits 'solitary.' All other authorities read as in the text.

earlier pleasures, which were very palpable and sensual. This is the peace which, says David, God speaks in the soul to the end that He may make it spiritual.<sup>1</sup> And this leads us to the third point.

8. The third sign whereby this purgation of sense may be recognized is that the soul can no longer meditate or reflect in the imaginative sphere of sense as it was wont,<sup>2</sup> however much it may of itself endeavour to do so. For God now begins to communicate Himself to it, no longer through sense, as He did aforetime, by means of reflections which joined and sundered its knowledge, but by pure spirit, into which consecutive reflections enter not; but He communicates Himself to it by an act of simple contemplation, to which neither the exterior nor the interior senses of the lower part of the soul can attain. From this time forward, therefore, imagination and fancy can find no support in any meditation,<sup>3</sup> and can gain no foothold by means thereof.

9. With regard to this third sign, it is to be understood that this embarrassment and dissatisfaction of the faculties proceed not from indisposition, for, when this is the case, and the indisposition, which never lasts for long,<sup>4</sup> comes to an end, the soul is able once again, by taking some trouble about the matter, to do what it did before, and the faculties find their wonted support. But in the purgation of the desire this is not so: when once the soul begins to enter therein, its inability to reflect with the faculties grows ever greater. For, although it is true that at first, and with some persons, the process is not as continuous<sup>5</sup> as this, so that occasionally they fail to abandon their pleasures and reflections<sup>6</sup> of sense (for perchance<sup>7</sup> by reason of their weakness it was not fitting to wean them from these immediately), yet this inability grows within them more and more and brings the workings of sense to an end, if indeed they are to make progress, for those who walk not in the way of contemplation act very differently. For this night of aridities is not usually continuous in their senses. At times they have these aridities; at others they have them not. At times they cannot meditate; at others they can. For God sets them in this night only to

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxiv, 9 [A.V., lxxxv, 8].

<sup>2</sup> E.p. is slightly explicit: '... or reflect, making use of the imaginative sphere of sense, that it may move it as it was wont.'

<sup>3</sup> E. p.: 'cannot find support or make a beginning with any meditation.'

<sup>4</sup> [The stress here is evidently on the transience of the distempers, whether they be moral or physical.]

<sup>5</sup> Bz.: 'as continent.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'and alleviations.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits 'perchance.'

prove them and to humble them, and to reform their desires, so that they go not nurturing in themselves a sinful<sup>1</sup> gluttony in spiritual things. He sets them not there in order to lead them in the way of the spirit, which is this contemplation; for not all those who walk of set purpose in the way of the spirit are brought by God to contemplation, nor even the half of them<sup>2</sup>—why, He best knows. And this is why He never completely weans the senses of such persons from the breasts of meditations and reflections, but only for short periods and at certain seasons, as we have said.

## CHAPTER X

*Of the way in which these souls are to conduct themselves in this dark night.*

**D**URING the time, then, of the aridities of this night of sense (wherein God effects the change of which we have spoken above, drawing forth the soul from the life of sense into that of the spirit—that is, from meditation to contemplation—wherein it no longer has any power to work or to reason with its faculties concerning the things of God, as has been said), spiritual persons suffer great trials, by reason not so much of the aridities which they suffer, as of the fear which they have of being lost on the road, thinking that all spiritual blessing is over for them and that God has abandoned them since they find no help or pleasure in good things.<sup>3</sup> Then they grow weary, and endeavour (as they have been accustomed to do) to concentrate their faculties with some degree of pleasure upon some object of meditation, thinking that, when they are not doing this and yet are conscious of making an effort, they are doing nothing. This effort they make not without great inward repugnance and unwillingness on the part of their soul, which was taking pleasure in being in that quietness and ease, instead of working with its faculties.<sup>4</sup> So they have abandoned the one pursuit,<sup>5</sup> yet draw no profit from the other; for, by seeking<sup>6</sup> what is prompted by their own spirit,<sup>7</sup> they lose the spirit of tranquillity and peace<sup>8</sup> which they had before. And thus they are like to

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'a sinful.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. reads 'to perfect contemplation' and omits 'nor even the half of them.'

<sup>3</sup> H: 'no help whatever in good things.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'instead . . . faculties.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'spoiling themselves in the one.'] E.p. has: 'turning aside in [i.e., from] the one.'

<sup>6</sup> A, B, M, e.p. have 'using.' Bz.: 'tasting.'

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'because they seek their spirit.']

<sup>8</sup> G, H, P omit: 'and peace.'

one who abandons what he has done in order to do it over again, or to one who leaves a city only to re-enter it, or to one who is hunting and lets his prey go in order to hunt it once more. This is useless here, for the soul will gain nothing further by conducting itself in this way, as has been said.<sup>1</sup>

2. These souls turn back at such a time if there is none who understands them; they abandon the road or lose courage; or, at the least, they are hindered from going farther by the great trouble which they take in advancing along the road of meditation and reasoning. Thus they fatigue and overwork their nature, imagining that they are failing through negligence or sin. But this trouble that they are taking is quite useless, for God is now leading them by another road, which is that of contemplation, and is very different from the first; for the one is of meditation and reasoning, and the other belongs neither to imagination nor yet to reasoning.

3. It is well for those who find themselves in this condition to take comfort, to persevere in patience and to be in no wise afflicted. Let them trust in God, Who abandons not those that seek Him with a simple and right heart, and will not fail to give them what is needful for the road, until He bring them into the clear and pure light of love. This last He will give them by means of that other dark night, that of the spirit, if they merit His bringing them thereto.

4. The way in which they are to conduct themselves in this night of sense is to devote themselves not at all to reasoning and meditation, since this is not the time for it, but to allow the soul to remain in peace and quietness, although it may seem clear<sup>2</sup> to them that they are doing nothing and are wasting their time, and although it may appear to them<sup>3</sup> that it is because of their weakness that they have no desire in that state to think of anything. The truth is that they will be doing quite sufficient if they have patience and persevere in prayer without making any effort.<sup>4</sup> What they must do is merely to leave the soul free and disencumbered and at rest from all knowledge and thought, troubling not themselves, in that state, about what they shall think or meditate upon, but contenting themselves with merely a peaceful and loving attentiveness toward God, and in being without anxiety,

<sup>1</sup> G modifies and abbreviates the rest of the chapter considerably from this point onward.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits 'clear.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'although it may seem to them.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'without doing anything themselves.'] E.p. abbreviates: 'persevere in prayer, only leaving the soul free,' etc.

without the ability and without desire<sup>1</sup> to have experience of Him or to perceive Him.<sup>2</sup> For all these yearnings disquiet and distract the soul from the peaceful quiet and sweet ease of contemplation which is here granted to it.

5. And although further scruples may come to them—that they are wasting their time, and that it would be well for them to do something else, because they can neither do nor think anything in prayer—let them suffer these scruples and remain in peace, as there is no question save of their being at ease and having freedom of spirit. For if such a soul should desire to make any effort of its own with its interior faculties, this means that it will hinder and lose the blessings which, by means of that peace and ease of the soul, God is instilling into it and impressing upon it. It is just as if some painter were painting or dyeing a face; if the sitter were to move because he desired to do something, he would prevent the painter from accomplishing anything and would disturb him in what he was doing. And thus, when the soul desires to remain in inward ease and peace, any operation and affection or attention<sup>3</sup> wherein it may then seek to indulge<sup>4</sup> will distract it and disquiet it and make it conscious of aridity and emptiness of sense. For the more a soul endeavours to find support in affection and knowledge, the more will it feel the lack of these, which cannot now be supplied to it upon that road.

6. Wherefore it behoves such a soul to pay no heed if the operations of its faculties become lost to it; it is rather to desire that this should happen quickly. For, by not hindering the operation of infused contemplation that God is bestowing upon it, it can receive this with more peaceful abundance, and cause<sup>5</sup> its spirit to be enkindled and to burn with the love which this dark and secret<sup>6</sup> contemplation brings with it and sets firmly in the soul.<sup>7</sup> For contemplation is naught else than a

<sup>1</sup> E.p. alters to: 'without excessive desire.' [As on p. 357, n. 4, this edition is endeavouring to soften expressions which might be taken as quietistic.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'to perceive Him or to have experience of Him.' Bz.: 'to have experience of Him or delight itself in perceiving Him.' [The word rendered 'have experience of' is *gustar*: *lit.*, 'taste.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'or anxious attention.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'which it may then wish to have.']

<sup>5</sup> M, e.p.: 'and be refreshed and cause.'

<sup>6</sup> V: 'and secure.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. here adds: 'I would not, however, have any general rule laid down here as to cessation from meditation or reflection; for such cessation should never come until meditation is no longer possible, and only when the Lord sets a hindrance to it either in the form of purgation and torment, or in that of most perfect contemplation. At other times, and on other occasions, this support and resource must always be used, and, further [the soul must meditate upon] the life and cross of Christ, which is the best means to purgation and patience, and to security on the road, and a wondrous help to lofty contemplation.'

secret, peaceful and loving infusion from God, which, if it be permitted, enkindles the soul with the spirit of love, according as the soul declares in the next lines, namely :

**Kindled in love with yearnings.<sup>1</sup>**

CHAPTER XI

*Wherein are expounded the three lines of the stanza.<sup>2</sup>*

**T**HIS enkindling of love is not as a rule felt at the first, because it has not begun to take hold upon the soul, by reason of the impurity of human nature, or because the soul has not understood its own state, as we have said, and has therefore given it no peaceful abiding-place within itself. Yet sometimes, nevertheless, there soon begins to make itself felt a certain yearning toward God ; and the more this increases, the more is the soul affectioned and enkindled in love toward God, without knowing or understanding how and whence this love and affection come to it, but from time to time seeing this flame and this enkindling grow so greatly within it that it desires God with yearning of love ; even as David, when he was in this dark night, said of himself in these words,<sup>3</sup> namely : 'Because my heart was enkindled (that is to say, in love of contemplation), my reins also were changed' : that is, my desires for sensual affections were changed,<sup>4</sup> namely from the way of sense to the way of the spirit, which is the aridity and cessation from all these things whereof we are speaking. And I, he says, was dissolved in nothing and annihilated, and I knew not ; for, as we have said, without knowing the way whereby it goes, the soul finds itself annihilated with respect to all things above and below which were accustomed to please it ; and it finds itself enamoured, without knowing how. And because at times the enkindling of love in the spirit grows greater, the yearnings for God become so great in the soul that the very bones seem to be dried up by this thirst, and the natural powers to be fading away, and their warmth and strength to be perishing through the intensity<sup>5</sup> of the thirst of love, for the soul feels

<sup>1</sup> G departs freely from the text throughout the exposition of this line.

<sup>2</sup> Thus e.p.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxxii, 21 [A.V., lxxiii, 21-2].

<sup>4</sup> Thus C, G, H, Mtr., V. The other authorities have only : 'my reins also were changed.' E.p. reads : 'my tastes and affections also were changed,' and continues : 'namely, from the way of sense,' etc.

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'livingness' : cf. the quotation below.]

that this thirst of love is a living thirst. This thirst David had and felt, when he said: 'My soul thirsted for the living God.'<sup>1</sup> Which is as much as to say: A living thirst was that of my soul. Of this thirst, since it is living, we may say that it kills. But it is to be noted that the vehemence of this thirst is not continuous, but occasional, although as a rule the soul is accustomed to feel it to a certain degree.<sup>2</sup>

2. But it must be noted that, as I began to say just now, this love is not as a rule felt at first, but only the dryness and emptiness are felt whereof we are speaking. Then in place of this love which afterwards becomes gradually enkindled, what the soul experiences in the midst of these aridities and emptinesses of the faculties is an habitual care and solicitude with respect to God, together with grief and fear that it is not serving Him. But it is a sacrifice which is not a little pleasing to God that the soul should go about afflicted and solicitous for His love. This solicitude and care leads the soul into that secret contemplation, until, the senses (that is, the sensual part) having in course of time been in some degree purged of the natural affections and powers by means of the aridities which it causes within them, this Divine love begins to be enkindled in the spirit. Meanwhile, however, like one who has begun a cure, the soul knows only suffering in this dark and arid purgation of the desire; by this means it becomes healed of many imperfections, and exercises itself in many virtues, in order to make itself meet for the said love, as we shall now say with respect to the line following:

**Oh, happy chance!**

3. When God leads the soul into this night of sense in order to purge the sense of its lower part and to subdue it, unite it and bring it into conformity with the spirit, by setting it in darkness and causing it to cease from meditation (as He afterwards does in order to purify the spirit to unite it with God, as we shall afterwards say<sup>3</sup>), He brings it into the night of the spirit, and (although it appears not so to it) the soul gains so many benefits that it holds it to be a happy chance to have escaped from the bonds and restrictions of the senses of its lower self, by means of this night aforesaid;<sup>4</sup> and utters the present line, namely: Oh, happy chance! With respect to this, it behoves us here to note the benefits which the soul finds in this night, and because of which it

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xli, 3 [A.V., xlii, 2].

<sup>2</sup> E.p. substitutes for this last sentence: 'although the vehemence of this thirst is not continuous, but only occasional; howbeit this thirst is ordinarily felt to a certain degree.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'as we shall afterwards say.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'this happy night.'

considers it a happy chance to have passed through it; all of which benefits the soul includes in the next line, namely:

**I went forth without being observed.**

4. This going forth is understood of the subjection to its sensual part which the soul suffered when it sought God through operations so weak, so limited and so defective<sup>1</sup> as are those of this lower part; for at every step it stumbled into numerous imperfections and ignorances, as we have noted above in writing of the seven capital sins. From all these it is freed when this night quenches within it all pleasures, whether from above or from below, and makes all meditation darkness to it, and grants it other innumerable blessings in the acquirement of the virtues, as we shall now show. For it will be a matter of great pleasure and great consolation, to one that journeys on this road, to see how that which seems to the soul so severe and adverse, and so contrary to spiritual pleasure, works in it so many blessings. These, as we say, are gained when the soul goes forth, as regards its affection and operation, by means of this night, from all created things, and when it journeys to eternal things,<sup>2</sup> which is great happiness and good fortune:<sup>3</sup> first, because of the great blessing which is in the quenching of the desire and affection with respect to all things; secondly, because they are very few that endure and persevere in entering by this strait gate and by the narrow way which leads to life, as says Our Saviour.<sup>4</sup> The strait gate is this night of sense, and the soul detaches itself from sense and strips itself thereof that it may enter by this gate, and establishes itself in faith,<sup>5</sup> which is a stranger to all sense, so that afterwards it may journey by the narrow way, which is the other night—that of the spirit—and this the soul afterwards<sup>6</sup> enters in order to journey to God in pure faith,<sup>7</sup> which is the means whereby the soul is united to God. By this road, since it is so narrow, dark and terrible (though there is no comparison between this night of sense and that other,<sup>8</sup> in its darkness and trials, as we shall say later), they are far fewer that journey, but its benefits are far greater without comparison than those of this present night. Of these benefits we shall now begin to say something, with such brevity as is possible, in order that we may pass to the other night.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'so . . . so . . . so . . .'

<sup>2</sup> V.: 'to invisible things.'

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'and chance': the same word as in the verse-line above.]

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew vii, 14.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'ruling itself by faith.' Some Codices have: 'uniting itself in faith.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'later.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'in faith most pure.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'and that of the spirit.'

## CHAPTER XII

*Of the benefits which this night<sup>1</sup> causes in the soul.*

THIS night and purgation of the desire, a happy one for the soul, works in it so many blessings and benefits (although to the soul, as we have said, it rather seems that blessings are being taken away from it) that, even as Abraham made a great feast when he weaned his son Isaac,<sup>2</sup> even so is there joy in Heaven because God is now taking this soul from its swaddling clothes, setting it down from His arms, making it to walk upon its feet, and likewise taking from it the milk of the breast and the soft and sweet food proper to children, and making it to eat bread with crust, and to begin to enjoy the food of robust persons. This food, in these aridities and this darkness of sense, is now given to the spirit, which is dry and emptied of all the sweetness of sense. And this food is the infused contemplation whereof we have spoken.

2. This is the first and principal benefit caused by this arid and dark night of contemplation: the knowledge of oneself and of one's misery.<sup>3</sup> For, besides the fact that all the favours which God grants to the soul are habitually granted to them enwrapped in this knowledge, these aridities and this emptiness of the faculties, compared with the abundance which the soul experienced aforetime and the difficulty which it finds in good works, make it recognize its own lowliness and misery, which in the time of its prosperity it was unable to see. Of this there is a good illustration in the Book of Exodus, where God, wishing to humble the children of Israel and desiring that they should know themselves, commanded them to take away and strip off the festal garments and adornments wherewith they were accustomed to adorn themselves in the Wilderness, saying: 'Now from henceforth strip yourselves of festal ornaments and put on everyday working dress, that ye may know what treatment ye deserve.'<sup>4</sup> This is as though He had said: Inasmuch as the attire that ye wear, being proper to festival and rejoicing, causes you to feel less humble concerning yourselves than ye should, put off from you this attire, in order that henceforth, seeing yourselves clothed with vileness, ye may know that ye merit no more, and may

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'this night of sense.'

<sup>2</sup> Genesis xxi, 8.

<sup>3</sup> So H and the other Codices. E.p. has: 'And this is the first and principal benefit which the soul gains here, and from which almost all the others are derived. Of these, the first benefit is the knowledge of oneself and of one's misery.'

<sup>4</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 5.

know who ye are. Wherefore the soul knows the truth that it knew not at first, concerning its own misery; for, at the time when it was clad as for a festival and found in God much pleasure, consolation and support, it was somewhat more satisfied and contented, since it thought itself to some extent to be serving God. It is true that such souls may not have this idea explicitly in their minds; but some suggestion of it at least is implanted in them by the satisfaction which they find in their pleasant experiences. But, now that the soul has put on its other and working attire—that of aridity and abandonment—and now that its first lights have turned into darkness, it possesses these lights more truly in this virtue of self-knowledge, which is so excellent and so necessary,<sup>1</sup> considering itself now as nothing and experiencing no satisfaction in itself; for it sees that it does nothing of itself neither can do anything. And the smallness of this self-satisfaction, together with the soul's affliction at not serving God, is considered and esteemed by God as greater than all the consolations which the soul formerly experienced and the works which it wrought, however great they were, inasmuch as they were the occasion of many imperfections and ignorances. And from this attire<sup>2</sup> of aridity proceed, as from their fount and source of self-knowledge, not only the things which we have described already, but also the benefits which we shall now describe and many more which will have to be omitted.

3. In the first place, the soul learns to commune with God with more respect and more courtesy, such as a soul must ever observe in converse with the Most High. These it knew not in its prosperous times of comfort and consolation, for that comforting favour<sup>3</sup> which it experienced made its craving for God somewhat bolder than was fitting, and discourteous and ill-considered.<sup>4</sup> Even so did it happen to Moses, when he perceived that God was speaking to him; blinded<sup>5</sup> by that pleasure and desire, without further consideration, he would have made bold to go to Him if God had not commanded him to stay and put off his shoes. By this incident we are shown the respect and discretion in detachment of desire wherewith a man is to commune with God. When Moses had obeyed in this matter, he became so discreet and so attentive that the Scripture says that not only did he not

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'it more truly possesses and has this virtue of self-knowledge so excellent and so necessary.' Our reading is that of H.

<sup>2</sup> H: 'this labour,' probably in error [*trabajo* for *traje*].

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits 'comforting [*gustoso*].' Bz. has: 'that fervour and comfort [*gusto*],' Mtr., V: 'that favour and comfort.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. 'somewhat bolder and less courteous than was fitting.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. has 'carried away' for 'blinded.'

make bold to draw near to God, but that he dared not even look at Him.<sup>1</sup> For, having taken off the shoes of his desires and pleasures, he became very conscious of his wretchedness in the sight of God, as befitted one about to hear the word of God. Even so likewise the preparation which God granted<sup>2</sup> to Job in order that he might speak with Him consisted not in those delights and glories which Job himself reports that he was wont to have in his God, but in leaving him naked upon a dung-hill,<sup>3</sup> abandoned and even persecuted by his friends, filled with anguish and bitterness, and the earth covered with worms. And then the Most High God, He that lifts up the poor man from the dung-hill, was pleased to come down and speak with him there face to face, revealing<sup>4</sup> to him the depths and heights<sup>5</sup> of His wisdom, in a way that He had never done in the time of his prosperity.

4. And here we must note another excellent benefit which there is in this night and aridity of the desire of sense, since we have had occasion to speak of it. It is that, in this dark night of the desire (to the end that the words of the Prophet may be fulfilled, namely: 'Thy light shall shine in the darkness'<sup>6</sup>), God will enlighten the soul, giving it knowledge, not only of its lowliness and wretchedness, as we have said, but likewise of the greatness and excellence of God. For, as well as quenching the desires and pleasures and attachments of sense, He cleanses and frees the understanding that it may understand the truth; for pleasure of sense and desire, even though it be for spiritual things, darkens and obstructs the spirit, and furthermore that straitness<sup>7</sup> and aridity of sense enlightens and quickens the understanding, as says Isaias.<sup>8</sup> Vexation makes us to understand how the soul that is empty and disencumbered, as is necessary for His Divine influence, is instructed supernaturally by God in His Divine wisdom, through this dark and arid night of contemplation,<sup>9</sup> as we have said; and this instruction God gave not in those first sweetnesss and joys.

5. This is very well explained by the same prophet Isaias, where he

<sup>1</sup> This is the reading of e.p. Cf. Exodus iii, 6. [P. Silverio reads, with] other authorities: 'dared not even reflect.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'to hear the Divine words. The preparation likewise which God granted . . .'

<sup>3</sup> [Job ii, 7-8.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'the Most High God, Who lifts up the poor man from the dung-hill, was pleased to communicate Himself to him with greater abundance and sweetness, revealing . . .'

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'the deep heights.']

<sup>6</sup> Isaias lviii, 10.

<sup>7</sup> A, B, Bz., C, H read 'appetite' [*apetito*] for 'straitness' [*aprieto*], presumably in error.

<sup>8</sup> Isaias xxviii, 19. [The author omits the actual text.]

<sup>9</sup> [To translate this passage at all, we must read the *Dios cómo* of P. Silverio (p. 403, l. 20), which is also found in P. Gerardo and elsewhere, as *cómo Dios*.]

says: 'Whom shall God teach His knowledge, and whom shall He make to understand the hearing?'<sup>1</sup> To those, He says, that are weaned from the milk and drawn away from the breasts.<sup>2</sup> Here it is shown that the first milk of spiritual sweetness is no preparation for this Divine influence, neither is there preparation in attachment to the breast of delectable meditations, belonging to the faculties of sense, which gave the soul pleasure; such preparation consists rather in the lack of the one and withdrawal from the other. Inasmuch as, in order to listen to God, the soul needs to stand upright and to be detached, with regard to affection and sense, even as the Prophet says concerning himself, in these words: I will stand upon my watch (this is that detachment of desire) and I will make firm my step (that is, I will not meditate with sense), in order to contemplate (that is, in order to understand that which may come to me from God).<sup>3</sup> So we have now arrived at this, that from this arid night there first of all comes self-knowledge, whence, as from a foundation, rises this other knowledge of God. For which cause Saint Augustine said to God: 'Let me know myself, Lord, and I shall know Thee.'<sup>4</sup> For, as the philosophers say, one extreme can be well known by another.

6. And in order to prove more completely how efficacious is this night of sense, with its aridity and its desolation, in bringing the soul that light which, as we say, it receives there from God, we shall quote that passage of David, wherein he clearly describes the great power which is in this night for bringing the soul this lofty knowledge of God. He says, then, thus: 'In the desert land, waterless, dry and pathless, I appeared before Thee, that I might see Thy virtue and Thy glory.'<sup>5</sup> It is a wondrous thing that David should say here that the means and the preparation for his knowledge of the glory of God were not the spiritual delights and the many pleasures which he had experienced, but the aridities and detachments of his sensual nature, which is here to be understood by the dry and desert land. No less wondrous is it that he should describe as the road to his perception and vision of the virtue of God, not the Divine meditations and conceptions of which he had often made use, but his being unable to form any conception of God or to walk by meditation produced by imaginary consideration, which is here to be understood by the pathless land. So that the means to a knowledge of God and of oneself is this dark night with its aridities

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'to hear His word.'

<sup>2</sup> Habacuc ii, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxii, 3 [A.V., lxiii, 1-2].

<sup>4</sup> Isaias xxxviii, 9.

<sup>5</sup> St. Augustine: *Soliloq.*, Cap. ii.

and voids, although it leads not to a knowledge of Him of the same plenitude and abundance that comes from the other night of the spirit, since this is only, as it were, the beginning of that other.

7. Likewise, from the aridities and voids of this night of the desire, the soul draws spiritual humility, which is the contrary virtue to the first capital sin, which, as we said, is spiritual pride. Through this humility, which is acquired by the said knowledge of self, the soul is purged from all those imperfections whereinto it fell with respect to that sin of pride,<sup>1</sup> in the time of its prosperity. For it sees itself so dry and miserable that the idea never even occurs to it that it is making better progress than others, or outstripping them, as it believed itself to be doing before. On the contrary, it recognizes that others are making better progress than itself.

8. And hence arises the love of its neighbours, for it esteems them, and judges them not as it was wont to do aforetime, when it saw that itself had great fervour and others not so. It is aware only of its own wretchedness, which it keeps before its eyes to such an extent that it never forgets it, nor takes occasion to set its eyes on anyone else. This was described wonderfully by David, when he was in this night, in these words: 'I was dumb and was humbled and kept silence from good things and my sorrow was renewed.'<sup>2</sup> This he says because it seemed to him that the good that was in his soul had so completely departed that not only did he neither speak nor find any language concerning it, but with respect to the good of others he was likewise dumb because of his grief at the knowledge of his misery.

9. In this condition, again, souls become submissive and obedient upon the spiritual road, for, when they see their own misery, not only do they hear<sup>3</sup> what is taught them, but they even desire that anyone soever may set them on the way and tell them what they ought to do. The affective<sup>4</sup> presumption which they sometimes had in their prosperity is taken from them; and finally, there are swept away from them on this road all the other imperfections which we noted above with respect to this first sin, which is spiritual pride.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'with respect to that sin of pride.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xxxviii, 3 [A.V., xxxix, 2].

<sup>3</sup> Bz.: 'do they obey.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits 'affective.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'all the other imperfections are swept away from them which we touched on above when speaking of spiritual pride.' A, B add: 'as we have said.'

## CHAPTER XIII

*Of other benefits which this night of sense causes in the soul.*<sup>1</sup>

WITH respect to the soul's imperfections of spiritual avarice, because of which it coveted this and that spiritual thing and found no satisfaction in this and that exercise by reason of its covetousness for the desire and pleasure which it found therein, this arid and dark night has now greatly reformed it. For, as it finds not the pleasure and sweetness which it was wont to find, but rather finds affliction and lack of sweetness, it has such moderate recourse to them that it might possibly now lose, through defective use, what aforesaid it lost through excess; although as a rule God gives to those whom He leads into this night humility and readiness, albeit with lack of sweetness, so that what is commanded them they may do for God's sake alone; and thus they no longer seek profit in many things<sup>2</sup> because they find no pleasure in them.

2. With respect to spiritual luxury, it is likewise clearly seen that, through this aridity and lack of sensible sweetness which the soul finds in spiritual things, it is freed from those impurities which we there noted; for we said that, as a rule, they proceeded from the pleasure which overflowed from spirit into sense.

3. But with regard to the imperfections from which the soul frees itself in this dark night with respect to the fourth sin, which is spiritual gluttony,<sup>3</sup> they may be found above, though they have not all been described there, because they are innumerable; and thus I will not detail them here, for I would fain make an end of this night in order to pass to the next, concerning which we shall have to pronounce grave words and instructions.<sup>4</sup> Let it suffice for the understanding of the innumerable benefits which, over and above those mentioned, the soul gains in this night with respect to this sin<sup>5</sup> of spiritual gluttony, to say that it frees itself from all those imperfections which have there been described, and from many other and greater evils, and vile abominations<sup>6</sup> which are not written above, into which fell many of whom we have had experience, because they had not reformed their desire as concerning this inordinate love of spiritual sweetness. For in this arid

<sup>1</sup> From e.p.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'and thus they detach themselves from many things.'

<sup>3</sup> H erroneously reads: 'spiritual pleasure.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'against this sin.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'grave instructions.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'and vile abominations.'

and dark night wherein He sets the soul, God has restrained its concupiscence and curbed its desire so that the soul cannot feed upon any pleasure or sweetness of sense,<sup>1</sup> whether from above or from below; and this He continues to do<sup>2</sup> after such manner that the soul is subjected, reformed and repressed with respect to concupiscence and desire. It loses the strength of its passions and concupiscence and it becomes sterile, because it no longer consults its likings. Just as, when none is accustomed to take milk from the breast, the courses of the milk<sup>3</sup> are dried up, so the desires of the soul are dried up. And besides<sup>4</sup> these things there follow admirable benefits from this spiritual sobriety, for, when desire and concupiscence are quenched, the soul lives in spiritual tranquillity and peace; for, where desire and concupiscence reign not, there is no disturbance, but peace and consolation of God.

4. From this there arises another and a second benefit, which is that the soul habitually has remembrance of God, with fear and dread of backsliding upon the spiritual road, as has been said. This is a great benefit, and not one of the least that results from this aridity and purgation of the desire, for the soul is purified and cleansed of the imperfections that were clinging to it because of the desires and affections, which of their own accord deaden and darken the soul.

5. There is another very great benefit for the soul in this night, which is that it practises several virtues together, as, for example, patience and longsuffering, which are often called upon in these times of emptiness and aridity, when the soul endures and perseveres in its spiritual exercises without consolation and without pleasure. It practises the charity of God, since it is not now moved by the pleasure of attraction and sweetness which it finds in its work, but only by God. It likewise practises here the virtue of fortitude, because, in these difficulties and insipidities which it finds in its work, it brings strength out of weakness and thus becomes strong. All the virtues, in short—the theological and also the cardinal and moral—both in body and in spirit,<sup>5</sup> are practised by the soul in these times of aridity.

6. And that in this night the soul obtains these four benefits which we have here described (namely, delight of peace, habitual remem-

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'so that it can hardly feed at all upon sweetnesses or pleasures of sense.'

<sup>2</sup> H omits: 'and this He continues to do.'

<sup>3</sup> A: 'of the breast of the milk'; Mtr.: 'of the veins of the milk.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits freely, reading: 'and this He continues to do after such manner that the soul is gradually correcting, mortifying and controlling itself, as regards concupiscence and desire, so that it seems to be losing the strength of its passions; and besides . . .'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. reads: 'All the virtues, the cardinal, and also the theological and moral,' and omits: 'both in body and in spirit.'

brance and thought of God, cleanness and purity of soul and the practice of the virtues which we have just described), David tells us, having experienced it himself when he was in this night, in these words: 'My soul refused consolations, I had remembrance of God, I found consolation and was exercised and my spirit failed.'<sup>1</sup> And he then says: 'And I meditated by night with my heart and was exercised, and I swept and purified my spirit'—that is to say, from all the affections.<sup>2</sup>

7. With respect to the imperfections of the other three spiritual sins which we have described above, which are wrath, envy and sloth, the soul is purged hereof likewise in this aridity of the desire and acquires the virtues opposed to them; for, softened and humbled by these aridities and hardships and other temptations and trials wherein God exercises it during this night, it becomes meek with respect to God, and to itself, and likewise with respect to its neighbour. So that it is no longer disturbed and angry with itself because of its own faults, nor with its neighbour because of his, neither is it displeased with God, nor does it utter unseemly complaints because He does not quickly make it holy.

8. Then, as to envy, the soul has charity toward others in this respect also; for, if it has any envy, this is no longer a vice as it was before, when it was grieved because others were preferred to it and given greater advantage. Its grief now comes from seeing how great is its own misery, and its envy (if it has any) is a virtuous envy, since it desires to imitate others, which is great virtue.

9. Neither are the sloth and the irksomeness which it now experiences concerning spiritual things vicious as they were before. For in the past these sins proceeded from the spiritual pleasures which the soul sometimes experienced and sought after when it found them not. But this new weariness proceeds not from this insufficiency of pleasure, because God has taken from the soul pleasure in all things in this purgation of the desire.

10. Besides these benefits which have been mentioned, the soul attains innumerable others by means of this arid contemplation. For often, in the midst of these times of aridity and hardship, God communicates to the soul, when it is least expecting it, the purest spiritual sweetness and love, together with a spiritual knowledge which is sometimes very delicate, each manifestation of which is of greater benefit and worth than those which the soul enjoyed aforetime; although in

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxvi, 4 [A.V., lxxvii, 3-4].

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxxvi, 7 [A.V., lxxvii, 6].

its beginnings the soul thinks that this is not so, for the spiritual influence now granted to it is very delicate and cannot be perceived by sense.

11. Finally, inasmuch as the soul is now purged from the affections and desires of sense, it obtains liberty of spirit, whereby in ever greater degree it gains the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit. Here, too, it is wondrously delivered from the hands of its three enemies—devil, world and flesh; for, its pleasure and delight of sense being quenched with respect to all things, neither the devil nor the world nor sensuality has any arms or any strength wherewith to make war upon the spirit.

12. These times of aridity, then, cause the soul to journey in all purity in the love of God, since it is no longer influenced in its actions by the pleasure and sweetness of the actions themselves, as perchance it was when it experienced sweetness, but only by a desire to please God. It becomes neither presumptuous nor self-satisfied, as perchance it was wont to become in the time of its prosperity, but fearful and timid with regard to itself, finding in itself no satisfaction whatsoever; and herein consists that holy fear which preserves and increases the virtues. This aridity, too, quenches natural energy and concupiscence, as has also been said. Save for the pleasure, indeed, which at certain times God Himself infuses into it, it is a wonder if it finds pleasure and consolation of sense, through its own diligence, in any spiritual exercise or action, as has already been said.

13. There grows within souls that experience this arid night concern for God and yearnings to serve Him, for in proportion as the breasts of sensuality, wherewith it sustained and nourished the desires that it pursued, are drying up, there remains nothing in that aridity and detachment save the yearning to serve God, which is a thing very pleasing to God. For, as David says, an afflicted spirit is a sacrifice to God.<sup>1</sup>

14. When the soul, then, knows that, in this arid purgation through which it has passed, it has derived and attained so many and such precious benefits<sup>2</sup> as those which have here been described, it tarries not in crying, as in the stanza of which we are expounding the lines, 'Oh, happy chance!—I went forth without being observed.' That is, 'I went forth' from the bonds and subjection of the desires of sense and the affections, 'without being observed'—that is to say, without the three enemies aforementioned being able to keep me from it. These

<sup>1</sup> Psalm I, 19 [A.V., li, 17].

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'attained such precious benefits, and so many.'

enemies, as we have said, bind the soul as with bonds,<sup>1</sup> in its desires and pleasures, and prevent it from going forth from itself to the liberty of the love<sup>2</sup> of God; and without these desires and pleasures they cannot give battle to the soul, as has been said.

15. When, therefore, the four passions of the soul—which are joy, grief, hope and fear—are calmed through continual mortification; when the natural desires have been lulled to sleep, in the sensual nature of the soul, by means of habitual times of aridity; and when the harmony of the senses and the interior faculties causes a suspension of labour and a cessation from the work of meditation, as we have said (which is the dwelling and the household of the lower part of the soul), these enemies cannot obstruct this spiritual liberty, and the house remains at rest and quiet, as says the following line:

**My house being now at rest.<sup>3</sup>**

## CHAPTER XIV

*Expounds this last line of the first stanza.<sup>4</sup>*

**W**HEN this house of sensuality was now at rest—that is, was mortified—its passions being quenched and its desires put to rest and lulled to sleep by means of this blessed night of the purgation of sense, the soul went forth, to set out upon the road and way of the spirit, which is that of progressives and proficients,<sup>5</sup> and which, by another name, is called the way of illumination or of infused contemplation, wherein God Himself feeds and refreshes the soul, without meditation, or the soul's active help.<sup>6</sup> Such, as we have said, is the night and purgation of sense in the soul.<sup>7</sup> In those who have afterwards to enter the other and more formidable night of the spirit, in order to pass to the Divine union of love of God (for not all

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'as with bonds.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'of the perfect love.'

<sup>3</sup> [So e.p., which completes the sense of the paragraph. The other versions, which P. Silverio follows, leave it unfinished, reading: '... of the soul), which is that which the Lord (*sic*) here calls His house, she says: "My house being now at rest."']

<sup>4</sup> The title is from e.p. In the first four lines of the first paragraph the Codices show considerable variations in secondary matters. We here follow H.

<sup>5</sup> [*de los aprovechantes y aprovechados.*] E.p., Bz. omit: 'progressives and.'

<sup>6</sup> H: 'or the soul's active way.' The 1630 edition reads as in the text above, but adds: 'with labour.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits: 'in the soul.'

pass habitually thereto, but only the smallest number), it is wont to be accompanied by formidable trials and temptations of sense, which last for a long time, albeit longer in some than in others. For to some the angel of Satan presents himself—namely, the spirit of fornication—that he may buffet their senses with abominable and violent temptations, and trouble their spirits with vile considerations and representations which are most<sup>1</sup> visible to the imagination, which things at times are a greater affliction to them than death.<sup>2</sup>

2. At other times in this night there is added to these things the spirit of blasphemy, which roams abroad, setting in the path of all the conceptions and thoughts of the soul intolerable blasphemies. These it sometimes suggests to the imagination with such violence that the soul almost utters them, which is a grave torment to it.

3. At other times another abominable spirit, which Isaias calls *Spiritus vertiginis*,<sup>3</sup> is allowed to molest them, not in order that they may fall, but that it may try them. This spirit darkens their senses in such a way that it fills them with numerous scruples and perplexities, so confusing that, as they judge, they can never, by any means, be satisfied concerning them, neither can they find any help for their judgment<sup>4</sup> in counsel or thought. This is one of the severest goads and horrors of this night, very closely akin to that which passes in the night of the spirit.

4. As a rule these storms and trials are sent by God in this night and purgation of sense to those whom afterwards He purposes to lead into the other night (though not all reach it), to the end that, when they have been chastened and buffeted, they may in this way continually exercise and prepare themselves, and continually accustom their senses and faculties to the union of wisdom which is to be bestowed upon them in that other night. For, if the soul be not tempted, exercised and proved with trials and temptations, it cannot quicken<sup>5</sup> its sense for Wisdom. For this reason it is said in Ecclesiasticus: 'He that has not been tempted, what does he know? And he that has not been proved, what are the things that he recognizes?'<sup>6</sup> To this truth Jeremias bears good witness, saying: 'Thou didst chastise me, Lord, and I was instructed.'<sup>7</sup> And the most proper form of this chastisement, for one

<sup>1</sup> Bz., e.p.: 'are very.'

<sup>2</sup> The next paragraph is lacking in V.

<sup>3</sup> [The 'spirit of giddiness' of D.V., and 'perverse spirit' of A.V., Isaias xix, 14.] E.p. adds: 'is allowed to try them,' and omits: 'not in order that they may fall, but.'

<sup>4</sup> So A. The other authorities [and P. Silverio] read: 'for the judgment.'

<sup>5</sup> So Bz., H, Mtr., P, V. A, B, C, M, e.p. read: 'arrive' [which involves a retranslation: 'its senses cannot arrive at wisdom'—this is not a natural reading in the Spanish].

<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiasticus xxxiv, 9–10.

<sup>7</sup> Jeremias xxxi, 18.

who will enter into Wisdom, is that of the interior trials which we are here describing, inasmuch as it is these which most effectively purge sense of all favours and consolations to which it was affected, with natural weakness, and by which the soul is truly humiliated in preparation for the exaltation which it is to experience.

5. For how long a time the soul will be held in this fasting and penance of sense, cannot be said with any certainty; for all do not experience it after one manner, neither do all encounter the same temptations. For this is meted out by the will of God, in conformity with the greater or the smaller degree of imperfection which each soul has to purge away. In conformity, likewise, with the degree of love of union<sup>1</sup> to which God is pleased to raise it, He will humble it with greater or less intensity or in greater or less time. Those who have the disposition and greater strength to suffer, He purges with greater intensity and more quickly. But those who are very weak are kept for a long time in this night, and these He purges very gently and with slight temptations. Habitually, too, He gives them refreshments of sense so that they may not fall away, and only after a long time do they attain to purity of perfection in this life, some of them never attaining to it at all. Such are neither properly in the night nor properly out of it; for, although they make no progress, yet, in order that they may continue in humility and self-knowledge, God exercises them for certain periods and at certain times<sup>2</sup> in those temptations and aridities; and at other times and seasons He assists them with consolations, lest they should grow faint and return to seek the consolations of the world. Other souls, which are weaker, God Himself accompanies, now appearing to them,<sup>3</sup> now moving farther away, that He may exercise them in His love; for without such turnings away they would not learn to reach God.

6. But the souls which are to pass on to that happy and high estate, the union of love, are wont as a rule to remain for a long time in these aridities and temptations,<sup>4</sup> however quickly God may lead them, as has been seen by experience. It is time, then, to begin to treat of the second night.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'of union of love.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'for certain days.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'now disappearing (from them).'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'and temptations.'

<sup>5</sup> So end the MSS. A and B add: 'wherein God places the soul.' E.p. substitutes for the last sentence: 'Bringing here, then, this book to a close, let us begin to treat of the second night.' G ends: '... aridities and temptations, until God set it in the second night of the spirit, whereof we have next to treat.' Bz. has: 'End of the Night. End of the first night and purgation which is of sense. Laus Deus (*sic*). That which God wills.' P has: 'Finis. Laus Deo Optimo et Maximo. Es (*sic*) Deus in nobis agitante calescimus ipso.'

## BOOK THE SECOND

### *Of the Dark Night of the Spirit.*<sup>1</sup>

#### CHAPTER I

*Which begins to treat of the dark night<sup>2</sup> of the spirit and says at what time it begins.*

THE soul which God is about to lead onward is not led by His Majesty into this night of the spirit<sup>3</sup> as soon as it goes forth from the aridities and trials of the first purgation and night of sense; rather it is wont to pass a long time, even years, after leaving the state of beginners, in exercising itself in that of proficient. In this latter state it is like to one that has come forth from a rigorous imprisonment;<sup>4</sup> it goes about the things of God with much greater freedom and satisfaction of the soul, and with more abundant and inward delight than it did<sup>5</sup> at the beginning before it entered the said night. For its imagination and faculties are no longer bound, as they were before, by meditation and anxiety of spirit, since it now very readily finds in its spirit the most serene and loving contemplation and spiritual sweetness without the labour of meditation; although, as the purgation of the soul is not complete (for the principal part thereof, which is that of the spirit, is wanting, without which, owing to the communication that exists between the one part and the other,<sup>6</sup> since the subject is one only, the purgation of sense, however violent it may have been, is not yet complete and perfect), it is never without certain occasional necessities, aridities,<sup>7</sup> darknesses and perils which are sometimes much more intense than those of the past, for they are as tokens and heralds of the coming night of the spirit, and are not of as long duration as will

<sup>1</sup> The MSS. vary as to the title. Some have none. B begins: 'Book the Second of the Purgation of the Spirit called Dark Night.'

<sup>2</sup> Thus the Codices. E.p. has: 'the second night.'

<sup>3</sup> So H, P. Bz. has: 'into this night and purgation of the spirit.' E.p.: 'into the union of love.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'from a narrow prison.')

<sup>6</sup> [i.e., between sense and spirit.]

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'than it had.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits: 'occasional necessities.'

be the night which is to come. For, having passed through a period, or periods, or days of this night and tempest, the soul soon returns to its wonted serenity; and after this manner God purges certain souls which are not to rise to so high a degree of love as are others, bringing them at times, and for short periods, into this night of contemplation and purgation of the spirit, causing night to come upon them<sup>1</sup> and then dawn; and this frequently, so that the words of David may be fulfilled, that He sends His crystal—that is, His contemplation—like morsels;<sup>2</sup> although these morsels of dark contemplation are never as intense as is that terrible night of contemplation which we are to describe, into which, of set purpose, God brings the soul that He may lead it to Divine union.

2. This sweetness, then, and this interior pleasure which we are describing, and which these progressives find and experience in their spirits so easily and so abundantly, is communicated to them in much greater abundance than aforetime, overflowing into their senses more than was usual previously to this purgation of sense; for, inasmuch as the sense is now purer, it can more easily feel the pleasures of the spirit after its manner. As, however, this sensual part of the soul is weak and incapable of experiencing the strong things of the spirit, it follows that these proficients, by reason of this spiritual communication which is made to their sensual part, endure therein many frailties and sufferings and weaknesses of the stomach, and in consequence are fatigued in spirit. For, as the Wise Man says: 'The corruptible body presseth down the soul.'<sup>3</sup> Hence comes it that the communications that are granted to these souls cannot be very strong or very intense or very spiritual, as is required for Divine union with God, by reason of the weakness and corruption of the sensual nature which has a part in them. Hence arise the raptures and trances and dislocations of the bones which always happen when the communications are not purely spiritual—that is, are not given to the spirit alone, as are those of the perfect who are purified by the second night of the spirit, and in whom these raptures and torments of the body no longer exist, since they are enjoying liberty of spirit, and their senses are now neither clouded nor transported.

3. And in order that the necessity for such souls to enter this night of the spirit may be understood, we will here note certain imperfections and perils which belong to these proficients.

<sup>1</sup> A, B, M, e.p. omit: 'upon them.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxlvii, 17 [D.V. and A.V.].

<sup>3</sup> Wisdom ix, 15.

## CHAPTER II

*Describes other imperfections<sup>1</sup> which belong to these proficient.*

THESE proficient have two kinds of imperfection: the one kind is habitual; the other actual. The habitual imperfections are the imperfect habits and affections which have remained all the time in the spirit, and are like roots, to which the purgation of sense has been unable to penetrate. The difference between the purgation of these and that of this other kind is the difference between the root and the branch, or between the removing of a stain which is fresh and one which is old and of long standing. For, as we said, the purgation of sense is only the entrance and beginning of contemplation leading to the purgation of the spirit, which, as we have likewise said,<sup>2</sup> serves rather to accommodate sense to spirit than to unite spirit with God. But there still remain in the spirit the stains of the old man, although the spirit thinks not that this is so, neither can it perceive them; if these stains be not removed with the soap and strong lye of the purgation of this night, the spirit will be unable to come to the purity of Divine union.

2. These souls have likewise the *hebetudo mentis*<sup>3</sup> and the natural roughness which every man contracts through sin, and the distraction and outward clinging of the spirit, which must be enlightened, refined and recollected by the afflictions and perils of that night. These habitual imperfections belong to all those who have not passed beyond this state of the proficient; they cannot coexist, as we say,<sup>4</sup> with the perfect state of union through love.

3. To actual imperfections all are not liable in the same way. Some, whose spiritual good is<sup>5</sup> so superficial and so readily affected by sense, fall into greater<sup>6</sup> difficulties and dangers, which we described at the beginning of this treatise. For, as they find so many and such abundant spiritual<sup>7</sup> communications and apprehensions, both in sense and in spirit, wherein they oftentimes see imaginary and spiritual visions (for all these things, together with other delectable feelings, come to many

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'Continues with other imperfections.'] The Codices read as in the text; but c.p. has: 'Of certain imperfections.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'as we have likewise said.'

<sup>3</sup> [*i.e.*, 'deadening of the mind.']

<sup>4</sup> Dz.: 'spiritual pleasures are.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits 'spiritual.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'as we say.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'into certain.'

souls in this state, wherein the devil and their own fancy very commonly practise deceptions on them), and, as the devil is apt to take such pleasure in impressing upon the soul and suggesting to it the said apprehensions and feelings, he fascinates and deludes it with great ease,<sup>1</sup> unless it takes the precaution of resigning itself to God, and of protecting itself strongly, by means of faith, from all these visions and feelings. For in this state the devil causes many to believe in vain visions<sup>2</sup> and false prophecies; and strives<sup>3</sup> to make them presume that God and the saints are speaking with them; and they often trust their own fancy. And the devil is also accustomed, in this state, to fill them with presumption and pride, so that they become attracted by vanity and arrogance, and allow themselves to be seen engaging in outward acts which appear holy, such as raptures and other manifestations. Thus they become bold with God, and lose holy fear, which is the key and the custodian of all the virtues; and in some of these souls so many are the falsehoods and deceits which tend to multiply, and so inveterate do they grow, that it is very doubtful if such souls will return<sup>4</sup> to the pure road of virtue and true spirituality. Into these miseries they fall because they are beginning to give themselves over to spiritual feelings and apprehensions with too great security, when they were beginning to make some progress upon the way.<sup>5</sup>

4. There is much more that I might say of these imperfections and of how they are the more incurable because such souls consider them to be more spiritual than the others, but I will leave this subject. I shall only add, in order to prove how necessary, for him that would go farther, is the night of the spirit, which is purgation, that none of these proficients, however strenuously he may have laboured, is free, at best, from many of those natural affections and imperfect habits, purification from which,<sup>6</sup> we said, is necessary if a soul is to pass to Divine union.

5. And over and above this (as we have said already), inasmuch as the lower part of the soul still has a share in these spiritual communications, they cannot be as intense, as pure and as strong as is needful for the aforesaid union; wherefore, in order to come to this union, the soul must needs enter into the second night of the spirit, wherein it

<sup>1</sup> A, M: 'with great difficulty': presumably a copyist's error.

<sup>2</sup> A, B, M, e.p.: 'causes to be believed many visions.'

<sup>3</sup> So e.p. The Codices [and also, rather meaninglessly, P. Silverio] read: 'here, in this place, he strives.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz.: 'it is very difficult for such to return.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'the spiritual way.'

<sup>6</sup> Bz.: 'mortification whereof.'

must strip sense and spirit perfectly from all these apprehensions and from all sweetness, and be made to walk in dark and pure faith, which is the proper and adequate means whereby the soul is united with God, according as Osee says, in these words: 'I will betroth thee—that is, I will unite thee—with Me through faith.'<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER III

*Annotation for that which follows.*

THESE souls, then, have now become proficient, because of the time which they have spent in feeding the senses with sweet communications,<sup>2</sup> so that their sensual part, being thus attracted and delighted by spiritual pleasure, which came to it from the spirit, may be united with the spirit and made one with it; each part after its own manner eating of one and the same spiritual food and from one and the same dish, as one person and with one sole intent, so that thus they may in a certain way be united and brought into agreement, and, thus united, may be prepared for the endurance of the stern and severe purgation of the spirit which awaits them. In this purgation these two parts of the soul, the spiritual and the sensual, must be completely purged, since the one is never truly purged without the other, the purgation of sense becoming effective when that of the spirit has fairly begun. Wherefore the night which we have called that of sense may and should be called a kind of correction and restraint of the desire rather than purgation. The reason is that all the imperfections and disorders of the sensual part have their strength and root in the spirit, where all habits, both good and bad, are brought into subjection,<sup>3</sup> and thus, until these are purged, the rebellions and depravities of sense cannot be purged thoroughly.<sup>4</sup>

2. Wherefore, in this night following, both parts of the soul are purged together, and it is for this end that it is well to have passed through the corrections of the first night, and the period of tranquillity<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Osee ii, 20. E.p. has: 'I will betroth thee with Me through faith.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. begins: 'These [souls], then, have now become proficient because of the time which they have spent in experiencing these sweet communications.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'where . . . subjection.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'until the bad habits are purged, the rebellions and depravities of sense cannot be purged thoroughly.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'and to have attained to the period of tranquillity' [*lit.*, 'the fair weather'].]

which proceeds from it, in order that, sense<sup>1</sup> being united with spirit, both may be purged after a certain manner and may then suffer with greater fortitude. For very great fortitude<sup>2</sup> is needful for so violent and severe a purgation, since, if the weakness of the lower part has not first been corrected and fortitude has not been gained from God through the sweet and delectable communion which the soul has afterwards enjoyed with Him, its nature will not have the strength or the disposition to bear it.

3. Therefore, since these proficientes are still at a very low stage of progress, and follow their own nature closely<sup>3</sup> in the intercourse and dealings which they have with God, because the gold of their spirit is not yet purified and refined, they still think of God as little children, and speak of God as little children, and feel and experience God as little children, even as Saint Paul says,<sup>4</sup> because they have not reached perfection, which is the union of the soul<sup>5</sup> with God. In the state of union, however, they will work great things in<sup>6</sup> the spirit, even as grown men, and their works and faculties will then be Divine rather than human, as will afterwards be said. To this end God is pleased to strip them of this old man and clothe them with the new man, who is created according to God, as the Apostle says,<sup>7</sup> in the newness of sense. He strips their faculties, affections and feelings, both spiritual and sensual, both outward and inward, leaving the understanding dark, the will dry, the memory empty and the affections in the deepest affliction, bitterness and constraint, taking from the soul the pleasure and experience of spiritual blessings which it had aforetime, in order to make of this privation one of the principles which are requisite in the spirit so that there may be introduced into it and united with it the spiritual form of the spirit, which is the union of love. All this the Lord works in the soul by means of a pure and dark contemplation,<sup>8</sup> as the soul explains in the first stanza. This, although we originally<sup>9</sup> interpreted it with reference to the first night of sense, is principally understood by the soul of this second night of the spirit, since this is the principal part of the purification of the soul. And thus we shall set it down and expound it here again in this sense.

<sup>1</sup> Only Bz., H, Mtr., V have the word 'sense.'

<sup>2</sup> Most authorities omit 'fortitude' [which, however, the context supplies]. Bz. gives it explicitly; A has: 'great preparation.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'and . . . closely.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'the union of love.'

<sup>6</sup> A, B, M, e.p. have 'with' for 'in.'

<sup>8</sup> Bz.: 'of a dark and clean contemplation.'

<sup>9</sup> Only e.p. has: 'originally.'

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 11.

<sup>7</sup> [Ephesians iv, 24.]

## CHAPTER IV

*Sets down the first stanza and the exposition thereof.<sup>1</sup>*

**On a dark night, Kindled<sup>2</sup> in love with yearnings—oh, happy chance!—**

**I went forth without being observed, My house being now at rest.**

EXPOSITION<sup>3</sup>

**I**NTERPRETING this stanza now with reference to purgation, contemplation or detachment or poverty of spirit, which here are almost one and the same thing, we can expound it after this manner and make the soul speak thus: In poverty, and without protection<sup>4</sup> or support in all the apprehensions of my soul—that is, in the darkness of my understanding and the constraint of my will, in affliction and anguish with respect to memory, remaining in the dark in pure faith, which is dark night for the said natural faculties, the will alone being touched by grief and afflictions and yearnings for the love of God—I went forth from myself—that is, from my low manner of understanding, from my weak mode of loving and from my poor and limited manner of experiencing God, without being hindered therein by sensuality or the devil.

2. This was a great happiness and a good chance for me; for, when the faculties had been perfectly annihilated and calmed, together with the passions, desires<sup>5</sup> and affections of my soul, wherewith I had experienced and tasted God after a lowly manner, I went forth from my own human dealings and operations to the operations and dealings of God.<sup>6</sup> That is to say, my understanding went forth from itself, turning from the human and natural to the Divine; for, when it is united with God by means of this purgation, its understanding no longer comes through its natural light and vigour,<sup>7</sup> but through the Divine Wisdom wherewith it has become united. And my will went forth from itself,

<sup>1</sup> So e.p. The Codices have only 'Stanza the First' or no title at all. V reads: 'Stanza for the third part.'

<sup>2</sup> B, G, H, M: 'aflame.'

<sup>3</sup> Omitted by A, B, e.p.

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'protection or.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits 'desires.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'I went forth from the dealings and limited operations aforementioned to the operations and dealings of God.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'it no longer has understanding after the narrow and limited manner that it had aforetime.'

becoming Divine; for, being united with Divine love, it no longer loves with its natural strength after a lowly manner,<sup>1</sup> but with strength and purity from the Holy Spirit;<sup>2</sup> and thus the will, which is now near to God, acts not after a human manner, and similarly the memory has become transformed into eternal apprehensions of glory. And finally, by means of this night and purgation of the old man, all the energies and affections of the soul are wholly renewed into a Divine temper and Divine delight.

There follows the line:

### On a dark night.

## CHAPTER V

*Sets down the first line and begins to explain how this dark contemplation is not only night for the soul but is also grief and torment.*<sup>3</sup>

**T**HIS dark night is an inflowing of God into the soul, which purges it from its ignorances and imperfections, habitual, natural and spiritual, and which is called by contemplatives infused contemplation, or mystical theology. Herein God secretly teaches the soul and instructs it in perfection of love, without its doing anything, or understanding of what manner is this infused contemplation.<sup>4</sup> Inasmuch as it is the loving wisdom of God, God produces striking effects<sup>5</sup> in the soul, for, by purging and illumining it, He prepares it for the union of love with God. Wherefore the same loving wisdom that purges<sup>6</sup> the blessed spirits and enlightens them is that which here purges the soul and illumines it.

2. But the question arises: Why is the Divine light (which, as we say, illumines and purges the soul from its ignorances) here called by the soul a dark night? To this the answer is that for two reasons<sup>7</sup> this Divine wisdom is not only night and darkness for the soul, but is likewise affliction and torment. The first is because of the height of

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'comes with the limited vigour and strength that it had aforetime.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'from the Divine Spirit.'

<sup>3</sup> So e.p. The Codices have no title.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'without its doing any more than wait lovingly upon God, hear Him and receive His light, without understanding of what manner is this infused contemplation.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: '... of God, it produces special effects.'

<sup>6</sup> A, B, M: 'Wherefore the same wisdom, as a thing that purges.'

<sup>7</sup> So A, B, Bz. The other authorities have: 'for two things.'

Divine Wisdom, which transcends the talent of the soul, and in this way is darkness to it; the second, because of its vileness and impurity, in which respect it is painful and afflictive to it, and is also dark.

3. In order to prove the first point, we must here assume a certain doctrine of the philosopher, which says that, the clearer and more manifest are Divine things in themselves, the darker and more hidden are they to the soul naturally; just as, the clearer is the light, the more it blinds and darkens the pupil of the owl, and, the more directly we look at the sun, the greater is the darkness which it causes in our visual faculty, overcoming and overwhelming it through its own weakness. In the same way, when this Divine light of contemplation assails the soul which is not yet wholly enlightened, it causes spiritual darkness in it; for not only does it overcome it, but likewise it overwhelms it and darkens the act of its natural intelligence. For this reason Saint Dionysius and other mystical theologians call this infused contemplation a ray of darkness—that is to say, for the soul that is not enlightened and purged—for the natural strength of the intellect is transcended and overwhelmed by its great supernatural light. Wherefore David likewise said: That near to God and round about Him are darkness and cloud;<sup>1</sup> not that this is so in fact, but that it is so to our weak understanding, which is blinded and darkened by so vast a light, to which it cannot attain.<sup>2</sup> For this cause the same David then explained himself, saying: 'Through the great splendour of His presence passed clouds'<sup>3</sup>—that is, between God and our understanding. And it is for this cause that, when God sends it out from Himself to the soul that is not yet transformed, this illumining ray<sup>4</sup> of His secret wisdom causes<sup>5</sup> thick darkness in the understanding.

4. And it is clear that this dark contemplation is in these its beginnings painful likewise to the soul; for, as this Divine infused contemplation has many excellences that are extremely good, and the soul that receives them, not being purged, has many miseries that are likewise extremely bad,<sup>6</sup> hence it follows that, as two contraries cannot coexist in one subject—the soul—it must of necessity have pain and suffering, since it is the subject wherein these two contraries war against each other, working the one against the other, by reason of the purgation of

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xcvi, 2 [A.V., xcvi, 2].

<sup>2</sup> [Lit., 'not attaining.'] B, Bz.: 'not attaining to it.' E.p.: 'not attaining to so great a height.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xvii, 13 [A.V., xviii, 12].

<sup>4</sup> H has 'kingdom' for 'ray' [*reino* for *rayo*], an evident error.

<sup>5</sup> So e.p. The other authorities [and P. Silverio] read: 'produces.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'that . . . bad.'

the imperfections of the soul which comes to pass through this contemplation. This we shall prove inductively in the manner following.

5. In the first place, because the light and wisdom of this contemplation is most bright and pure, and the soul which it assails is dark and impure, it follows that the soul suffers great pain when it receives it in itself, just as, when<sup>1</sup> the eyes are dimmed by humours, and become impure and weak, the assault made upon them by a bright light causes them pain. And when the soul suffers the direct assault of this Divine light, its pain, which results from its impurity, is immense; because, when this pure light assails the soul, in order to expel its impurity, the soul feels itself to be so impure and miserable that it believes God to be against it, and thinks that it has set itself up against God. This causes it sore grief and pain, because it now believes that God has cast it away: this was one of the greatest trials which Job felt when God sent him this experience, and he said: 'Why hast Thou set me contrary to Thee, so that I am grievous and burdensome to myself?'<sup>2</sup> For, by means of this pure light,<sup>3</sup> the soul now sees its impurity clearly (although darkly), and knows clearly that it is unworthy of God or of any creature. And what gives it most pain is that it thinks that it will never be worthy<sup>4</sup> and that its good things are all over for it. This is caused by the profound immersion of its spirit in the knowledge and realization of its evils and miseries; for this Divine and dark light now reveals them all to the eye, that it may see clearly how in its own strength it can never have aught else. In this sense we may understand that passage from David, which says: 'For iniquity Thou hast corrected man and hast made his soul to be undone and consumed: he wastes away as the spider.'<sup>5</sup>

6. The second way in which the soul suffers pain is by reason of its weakness, natural, moral and spiritual; for, when this Divine contemplation assails the soul with a certain force, in order to strengthen it and subdue it, it suffers such pain in its weakness that it nearly swoons away. This is especially so at certain times when it is assailed with somewhat greater force; for sense and spirit, as if beneath some immense and dark load, are in such great pain and agony that the soul would find advantage and relief in death. This had been experienced

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'it follows that to receive it afflicts the soul greatly, even as when,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> Job vii, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Thus the Codices, except A, B, P, which read: 'this clear light.' E.p. has: 'this clear and pure light.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'is the fear that it will never be worthy.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm xxxviii, 12 [A.V., xxxix, 11].

by the prophet Job, when he said: 'I desire not that He should have intercourse with me in great strength, lest He oppress me with the weight of His greatness.'<sup>1</sup>

7. Beneath the power of this oppression and weight the soul feels itself so far from being favoured that it thinks, and correctly so, that even that wherein it was wont to find some help has vanished with everything else, and that there is none who has pity upon it. To this effect Job says likewise: 'Have pity upon me, have pity upon me,<sup>2</sup> at least ye my friends, because the hand of the Lord has touched me.'<sup>3</sup> A thing of great wonder and pity is it that the soul's weakness and impurity should now be so great that, though the hand of God is of itself so light and gentle, the soul should now feel it to be so heavy and so contrary,<sup>4</sup> though it neither weighs it down nor rests upon it, but only touches it, and that mercifully, since He does this in order to grant the soul favours and not to chastise it.

## CHAPTER VI

*Of other kinds of pain that the soul suffers in this night.<sup>5</sup>*

THE third kind of suffering and pain that the soul endures in this state results from the fact that two other extremes meet here in one, namely, the Divine and the human. The Divine is this purgative contemplation, and the human is the subject—that is, the soul. The Divine assails the soul in order to renew it<sup>6</sup> and thus to make it Divine; and, stripping it of the habitual affections and attachments of the old man, to which it is very closely united, knit together and conformed, destroys and consumes its spiritual substance,<sup>7</sup> and absorbs it in deep and profound darkness. As a result of this, the soul feels itself to be perishing and melting away, in the presence and sight of its miseries, in a cruel spiritual death, even as if it had been swallowed by

<sup>1</sup> Job xliii, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Job xix, 21.

<sup>3</sup> [There is a reference here to Job vii, 20: cf. § 5, above.]

<sup>4</sup> So e.p. The other authorities have no title.

<sup>5</sup> So H, V. A, B: 'purge it and renew it.' M: 'make it and renew it.' C, P: 'take it and renew it.' Bz.: 'cut it and renew it.' E.p.: 'season it and renew it.' As will be seen, there is a reading for every preference. We cannot be sure which is the true one.

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits: 'its spiritual substance' and reads: 'breaks it up and bruises it.' The two verbs are greatly varied by the different authorities but their general sense remains much as in the text above, which gives the reading of H, Mtr., V.

<sup>2</sup> Some Codices do not repeat this phrase.

a beast and felt itself being devoured in the darkness of its belly, suffering such anguish as was endured by Jonas in the belly of that beast of the sea.<sup>1</sup> For in this sepulchre of dark death it must needs abide until the spiritual resurrection which it hopes for.

2. A description of this suffering and pain, although in truth it transcends all description, is given by David, when he says: 'The lamentations of death compassed me about; the pains of hell surrounded me; I cried in my tribulation.'<sup>2</sup> But what the sorrowful soul feels most in this condition is its clear perception, as it thinks, that God has abandoned it, and, in His abhorrence of it, has flung it into darkness; it is a grave and piteous grief for it to believe that God has forsaken it. It is this that David also felt so much in a like case, saying: 'After the manner wherein the wounded are dead in the sepulchres,<sup>3</sup> being now cast off by Thy hand, so that Thou rememberest them no more, even so have they set me in the deepest and lowest lake, in the dark places and in the shadow of death, and Thy fury is confirmed upon me and all Thy waves Thou hast brought in upon me.'<sup>4</sup> For indeed, when this purgative contemplation is most severe, the soul feels very keenly the shadow of death and the lamentations of death<sup>5</sup> and the pains of hell, which consist in its feeling itself to be without God, and chastised and cast out, and unworthy of Him;<sup>6</sup> and it feels that He is wroth with it. All this is felt by the soul in this condition—yea, and more, for it believes<sup>7</sup> that it is so with it for ever.

3. It feels, too, that all creatures have forsaken it, and that it is condemned by them, particularly by its friends. Wherefore David presently continues, saying: 'Thou hast put far from me my friends and acquaintances; they have counted me an abomination.'<sup>8</sup> To all this will Jonas testify, as one who likewise experienced it in the belly of the beast, both bodily and spiritually. 'Thou hast cast me forth (he says) into the deep, into the heart of the sea, and the flood hath compassed me; all its billows and waves have passed over me. And I said, "I am cast away out of the sight of Thine eyes, but I shall once again see Thy holy temple" (which he says, because God purifies the soul in this state that it may see His temple); the waters<sup>9</sup> compassed me, even to the soul, the deep hath closed me round about, the ocean hath covered my head; I went down to the lowest parts of the mountains; the bars of

<sup>1</sup> Jonas ii, 1.

<sup>3</sup> H omits: 'in the sepulchres.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'of death.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'with a fearful apprehension,'

<sup>8</sup> Psalm lxxxvii, 9 [A.V., lxxxviii, 8].

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xvii, 5-7 [A.V., xviii, 4-5].

<sup>4</sup> Psalm lxxxvii, 6-8 [A.V., lxxxviii, 5-7].

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'and He is angered with it.'

<sup>9</sup> but no MS. has this addition.

<sup>9</sup> Bz.: 'the afflictions.'

the earth have shut me up<sup>1</sup> for ever.'<sup>2</sup> By these bars are here understood, in this sense, imperfections of the soul, which have impeded it from enjoying this delectable contemplation.

4. The fourth kind of pain is caused in the soul by another excellence of this dark contemplation, which is its majesty and greatness,<sup>3</sup> from which arises in the soul a consciousness of the other extreme which is in itself—namely, that of the deepest poverty and wretchedness: this is one of the chiefest pains that it suffers in this purgation. For it feels within itself a profound emptiness and impoverishment of three kinds of good, which are ordained for the pleasure of the soul, which are the temporal, the natural and the spiritual; and finds itself set in the midst of the evils contrary to these, namely, miseries of imperfection, aridity and emptiness of the apprehensions of the faculties and abandonment of the spirit in darkness. Inasmuch as God here purges the soul according to the substance of its sense and spirit, and according to the interior and exterior faculties, the soul must needs be in all its parts reduced to a state of emptiness, poverty and abandonment and must be left dry and empty and in darkness.<sup>4</sup> For the sensual part is purified in aridity, the faculties are purified in the emptiness of their perceptions and the spirit is purified in thick darkness.

5. All this God brings to pass by means of this dark contemplation; wherein the soul not only suffers this emptiness and the suspension of these natural supports and perceptions, which is a most afflictive suffering (as if a man were suspended or held in the air so that he could not breathe), but likewise He is purging the soul, annihilating it, emptying it or consuming in it (even as fire consumes the mouldiness and the rust of metal) all the affections and imperfect habits which it has contracted in its whole life. Since these are deeply rooted in the substance of the soul, it is wont to suffer great undoing<sup>5</sup> and inward torment, besides the said poverty and emptiness, natural and spiritual, so that there may here be fulfilled that passage from Ezechiel which says: 'Heap together the bones and I will burn them in the fire; the flesh shall be consumed and the whole composition shall be burned and the bones shall be destroyed.'<sup>6</sup> Herein is understood the pain which is

<sup>1</sup> V: 'surrounded me.'

<sup>2</sup> Jonas ii, 4-7 [A.V., ii, 3-6].

<sup>3</sup> So Bz., C, G, H, Mtr., V. A, B, M omit this phrase. E.p. has: 'which is the majesty and greatness of God.' The Saint may mean that the soul acquires in this contemplation a greater knowledge of its own excellence, and in consequence has the greater obligation to God, in Whose image and likeness it is made.

<sup>4</sup> Bz.: 'and in black darkness.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B, M: 'great burdens and undoing'; Bz.: 'great sorrow.' The text follows e.p., H, Mtr., P, V.

<sup>6</sup> Ezechiel xxiv 10.

suffered in the emptiness and poverty of the substance of the soul<sup>1</sup> both in sense and in spirit. And concerning this he then says: 'Set it also empty upon the coals, that its metal may become hot and molten, and its uncleanness may be destroyed within it, and its rust may be consumed.'<sup>2</sup> Herein is described the grave suffering which the soul here endures in the purgation of the fire of this contemplation, for the Prophet says here that, in order for the rust of the affections which are within the soul to be purified and destroyed, it is needful that, in a certain manner, the soul itself should be annihilated and destroyed, since these passions and imperfections have become natural to it.<sup>3</sup>

6. Wherefore, because the soul is purified in this furnace like gold in a crucible, as says the Wise Man,<sup>4</sup> it is conscious of this complete undoing of itself in its very substance, together with the direst poverty, wherein it is, as it were, nearing its end, as may be seen by that which David says of himself in this respect, in these words: 'Save me, Lord (he cries to God), for the waters have come in even unto my soul; I am made fast in the mire of the deep and there is no place where I can stand; I am come into the depth of the sea and a tempest hath overwhelmed me; I have laboured crying, my throat<sup>5</sup> has become hoarse, mine eyes have failed whilst I hope in my God.'<sup>6</sup> Here God greatly humbles the soul in order that He may afterwards greatly exalt it; and if He ordained not that, when these feelings arise within the soul, they should speedily be stilled, it would die<sup>7</sup> in a very short space; but there are only occasional periods when it is conscious of their greatest intensity. At times, however, they are so keen that the soul seems to be seeing hell and perdition opened. Of such are they that in truth go down alive into hell, being purged here on earth in the same manner as there,<sup>8</sup> since this purgation is that which would have to be accomplished there.<sup>9</sup> And thus the soul that passes through this<sup>10</sup> either enters not that place<sup>11</sup> at all, or tarries there but for a very<sup>12</sup> short time; for one hour of purgation here is more profitable than are many there.

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'and poverty of the soul.'

<sup>2</sup> Ezechiel xxiv, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Bz.: 'eradicated from it.'

<sup>4</sup> Wisdom iii, 6.

<sup>5</sup> So e.p. The other authorities use the plural form of 'throat' (*gargantas*).

<sup>6</sup> Psalm lxviii, 2-4 [A.V., lxix, 1-3].

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'it would forsake the body.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'being purged here in a kind of purgatory.' [This reading makes explicit what is evidently meant, the word 'hell,' as the preceding sentence shows, being used metaphorically—a 'concealed' quotation from Psalm liv, 16 (A.V., lv, 15).]

<sup>9</sup> E.p. adds: 'when it is for sins, even though they be venial.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p. adds: 'and is thoroughly purged.'

<sup>11</sup> [i.e., purgatory.]

<sup>12</sup> E.p. omits 'very.'

## CHAPTER VII

*Continues the same matter and considers other afflictions and constraints of the will.*<sup>1</sup>

THE afflictions and constraints of the will are now very great likewise, and of such a kind that they sometimes transpierce the soul with a sudden remembrance of the evils in the midst of which it finds itself, and with the uncertainty of finding a remedy for them. And to this is added the remembrance of times of prosperity now past; for as a rule souls that enter this night have had many consolations<sup>2</sup> from God, and have rendered Him many services, and it causes them the greater grief to see that they are far removed from that happiness, and unable to enter into it. This was also described by Job, who had had experience of it, in these words: 'I, who was wont to be wealthy and rich, am suddenly undone and broken to pieces; He hath taken me by my neck; He hath broken me and set me up for His mark<sup>3</sup> to wound me; He hath compassed me round about with His lances; He hath wounded all my loins; He hath not spared; He hath poured out my bowels on the earth; He hath broken me with wound upon wound;<sup>4</sup> He hath assailed me as a strong giant; I have sewed sack-cloth upon my skin and have covered my flesh with ashes; my face is become swollen with weeping and mine eyes are blinded.'<sup>5</sup>

2. So many and so grievous<sup>6</sup> are the afflictions of this night, and so many passages of Scripture are there which could be cited to this purpose, that time and strength would fail us to write of them, for all that can be said thereof is certainly less than the truth. From the passages already quoted some idea may be gained of them. And, that we may bring the exposition of this line to a close and explain more fully what is worked in the soul by this night, I shall tell what Jeremias felt about it, which, since there is so much of it, he describes and bewails in many words after this manner: 'I am the man that see my poverty in the rod of His indignation; He hath threatened me and brought me into darkness and not into light. So far hath He turned against me and hath converted His hand upon me all the day! My skin and my flesh hath He made old; He hath broken my bones; He hath

<sup>1</sup> So e.p. The Codices have no title.

<sup>2</sup> The noun occurs only in e.p.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'for His target.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'He hath broken me and added wounds upon wounds.'

<sup>5</sup> Job xvi, 13-17 [A.V., xvi, 12-16].

<sup>6</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'and so great.'

made a fence around me and compassed me with gall and trial; He hath set me in dark places, as those that are dead for ever. He hath made a fence around me and against me, that I may not go out; He hath made my captivity heavy. Yea, and when I have cried<sup>1</sup> and have entreated, He hath shut out my prayer. He hath enclosed my paths and ways out with square stones; He hath thwarted my steps. He hath set ambushes<sup>2</sup> for me; He hath become to me a lion in a secret place. He hath turned aside my steps and broken me in pieces, He hath made<sup>3</sup> me desolate; He hath bent His bow and set me as a mark for His arrow. He hath shot into my reins the daughters of His quiver. I have become a derision to all the people, and laughter and scorn for them all the day. He hath filled me with bitterness and hath made me drunken with wormwood. He hath broken my teeth by number;<sup>4</sup> He hath fed me with ashes. My soul is cast out from peace; I have forgotten good things. And I said: "Mine end is frustrated and cut short, together with my desire and my hope from the Lord. Remember my poverty and my excess, the wormwood and the gall. I shall be mindful with remembrance and my soul shall be undone within me in pains." <sup>5</sup>

3. All these complaints Jeremias makes about these pains and trials, and by means of them he most vividly depicts the sufferings of the soul in this spiritual night and purgation.<sup>6</sup> Wherefore the soul that God sets in this tempestuous<sup>7</sup> and horrible night is deserving of great compassion. For, although it experiences much happiness by reason of the great blessings that must arise on this account within it, when, as Job says, God raises up profound blessings in the soul out of darkness, and brings up to light the shadow of death,<sup>8</sup> so that, as David says, His light comes to be as was His darkness;<sup>9</sup> yet notwithstanding, by reason of the dreadful pain which the soul is suffering, and of the great uncertainty which it has concerning the remedy for it, since it believes,<sup>10</sup> as this prophet says here, that its evil will never end, and it thinks, as David says likewise, that God set it in dark places like those that are dead,<sup>11</sup> and for this reason brought its spirit within it into anguish and troubled its heart,<sup>12</sup> it suffers great pain and grief, since there is added

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'when I am calling.'

<sup>2</sup> H, M read: 'bear [sic] ambushes' [cf. Lamentations iii, 10].

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'hath left.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. [more exactly]: 'one by one.'

<sup>5</sup> Lamentations iii, 1-20.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'wherein this spiritual night and purgation sets it.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'fearful.'

<sup>8</sup> Job xii, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Psalm cxxxviii, 12 [A.V., cxxxix, 12].

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: 'it thinks.'

<sup>11</sup> [Lit., 'like to the dead of the world (or of the age).']

<sup>12</sup> Psalm cxlii, 3 [A.V., cxliii, 3-4].

to all this (because of the solitude and abandonment caused in it by this dark night) the fact that it finds no consolation or support in any instruction nor in a spiritual master. For, although in many ways its director may show it good reason for being comforted because of the blessings which are contained in these afflictions, it cannot believe him. For it is so greatly absorbed and immersed in the realization of those evils wherein it sees its own miseries so clearly, that it thinks that, as its director observes not that which it sees and feels, he is speaking in this manner because he understands it not; and so, instead of comfort, it rather receives fresh affliction, since it believes that its director's advice contains no remedy for its troubles. And, in truth, this is so; for, until the Lord shall have completely purged it after the manner that He wills, no means or remedy is of any service or profit for the relief of its affliction; the more so because the soul is as powerless in this case as one who has been imprisoned in a dark dungeon, and is bound hand and foot, and can neither move nor see, nor feel any favour whether from above or from below, until the spirit is humbled, softened and purified, and grows so keen and delicate and pure that it can become one with the Spirit of God, according to the degree of union of love which His mercy is pleased to grant it; in proportion to this the purgation<sup>1</sup> is of greater or less severity and of greater or less duration.

4. But, if it is to be really effectual, it will last for some years, however severe it be; since the purgative process allows intervals of relief,<sup>2</sup> wherein, by the dispensation of God, this dark contemplation ceases to assail the soul in the form and manner of purgation, and assails it after an illuminative and a loving manner, wherein the soul, like one that has gone forth from this dungeon and imprisonment, and is brought into the recreation of spaciousness and liberty, feels and experiences great sweetness of peace and loving friendship with God, together with a ready abundance of spiritual communication. This is to the soul a sign of the health which is being wrought within it by the said purgation and a foretaste of the abundance for which it hopes. Occasionally this is so great that the soul believes its trials to be at last over. For spiritual things in the soul, when they are most purely spiritual, have this characteristic that, if trials come to it, the soul believes that it will never escape from them, and that all its blessings are now over, as has been seen in the passages quoted; and, if spiritual blessings come, the soul believes in the same way that its troubles are

<sup>1</sup> A, B, H, M, P, V have: 'the union.'

<sup>2</sup> A, V, e.p.: 'intervals and reliefs.'

now over, and that blessings will never fail it. This was so with David, when he found himself in the midst of them, as he confesses in these words: 'I said in my abundance: "I shall never be moved."' <sup>1</sup>

5. This happens because the actual possession by the spirit of one of two contrary things itself makes impossible the actual possession and realization of the other contrary thing; this is not so,<sup>2</sup> however, in the sensual part of the soul, because its apprehension is weak. But, as the spirit is not yet completely purged and cleansed from the affections that it has contracted from its lower part, while changing not in so far as it is spirit, it can be moved to further afflictions in so far as these affections sway it.<sup>3</sup> In this way, as we see, David was afterwards moved, and experienced many ills and afflictions, although in the time of his abundance he had thought and said that he would never be moved. Just so is it with the soul in this condition, when it sees itself moved by that abundance of spiritual blessings, and, being unable to see the root of the imperfection and impurity which still remain within it, thinks that its trials are over.

6. This thought, however, comes to the soul but seldom, for, until spiritual purification is complete and perfected, the sweet communication is very rarely so abundant as to conceal from the soul the root which remains hidden, in such a way that the soul can cease to feel that there is something that it lacks within itself or that it has still to do. Thus it cannot completely enjoy that relief, but feels as if one of its enemies were within it, and although this enemy is, as it were, hushed and asleep, it fears that he will come to life again and attack it.<sup>4</sup> And this is what indeed happens, for, when the soul is most secure and least alert,<sup>5</sup> it is dragged down and immersed again in another and a worse<sup>6</sup> degree of affliction which is severer and darker and more grievous than that which is past; and this new affliction will continue for a further period of time, perhaps longer than the first. And the soul once more comes to believe<sup>7</sup> that all its blessings are over for ever. Although it had thought during its first trial that there were no more afflictions which it could suffer, and yet, after the trial was over, it enjoyed great blessings, this experience is not sufficient to take away its belief, during

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xxix, 7 [A.V., xxx, 6].

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'which is not so much so.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'the affections that its lower part has contracted, although it has greater consistency and firmness, yet, in so far as it is affected by them, it is liable to further afflictions.'

<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'and play his tricks upon it.']

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and least alert.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'and a worse.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'to persuade itself.' H omits: 'than the first. And then the soul once more comes to [believe that].'

this second degree of trial, that all is now over for it and that it will never again be happy as in the past. For, as I say, this belief, of which the soul is so sure, is caused in it by the actual apprehension of the spirit, which annihilates within it all that is contrary to it.<sup>1</sup>

7. This is the reason why those who lie in purgatory suffer great misgivings as to whether they will ever go forth from it and whether their pains will ever be over.<sup>2</sup> For, although they have the habit of the three theological virtues—faith, hope and charity—the present realization which they have of their afflictions and of their deprivation of God allows them not to enjoy the present blessing and consolation of these virtues. For, although they are able to realize that they have a great love for God, this is no consolation to them, since they cannot think that God loves them or that they are worthy that He should do so; rather, as they see that they are deprived of Him, and left in their own miseries, they think that there is that in themselves which provides a very good reason why they should with perfect justice be abhorred and cast out by God for ever.<sup>3</sup> And thus, although the soul in this purgation is conscious that it has a great love for God and would give a thousand lives for Him (which is the truth, for in these trials such

<sup>1</sup> E.p. has: 'which annihilates in it [*the soul, not the spirit, as the gender of the Spanish noun shows*] all that can cause it joy.' It then omits the next paragraph as far as the words 'cast out by God for ever.' A, V also make this omission, but not B, as P. Gerardo mistakenly asserts. G omits almost the whole of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> M, probably in error [*desear for de que se han*]: 'and desire their pains to be over.' B reads very similarly [certainly with intention]. P omits: 'and . . . over.'

<sup>3</sup> B, Bz., C, H, Mtr. all have this long passage on the suffering of the soul in Purgatory. It would be rash, therefore, to deny that St. John of the Cross is its author, [or to suppose, as P. Gerardo did, that he deleted it during a revision of his works]. An admirably constructed synthesis of these questions will be found in B. Belarmino, *De Purgatorio*, Bk. II, chaps. iv, v. He asks if souls in Purgatory are sure of their salvation. This was denied by Luther, and by a number of Catholic writers, who held that, among the afflictions of these souls, the greatest is this very uncertainty; some maintain that, though they have in fact such certainty, they are unaware of it. Belarmino quotes among other authorities Denis the Carthusian, *De quattuor novissimis*, Gerson (Lect. I *De Vita Spirituali*) and John of Rochester (against Luther's 32nd article); these writers claim that, as sin which is venial is only so through the Divine mercy, it may with perfect justice be rewarded by eternal punishment, and thus souls that have committed venial sin cannot be confident of their salvation. He also shows, however, that the common opinion of theologians is that the souls in Purgatory are sure of their salvation, and considers various degrees of certainty, adding very truly that, while these souls experience no fear, they experience hope, since they have not yet the Beatific vision.

Uncertainty as to their salvation, it is said, might arise from ignorance of the sentence passed upon them by the Judge or from the deadening of their faculties by the torments which they are suffering. Belarmino refutes these and other suppositions with great force and effect. St. John of the Cross seems to be referring to the last named when he writes of the realization of their afflictions and their deprivation of God not allowing them to enjoy the blessings of the theological virtues. It is not surprising if the Saint, not having examined very closely this question, of which he would have read treatments in various authors, thought of it principally as an apt illustration of the purifying and refining effects of passive purgation; and an apt illustration it certainly is.

souls love their God very earnestly), yet this is no relief to it, but rather brings it greater affliction. For it loves Him so much that it cares about naught beside; when, therefore, it sees itself to be so wretched that it cannot believe that God loves it, nor that there is or will ever be reason why He should do so, but rather<sup>1</sup> that there is reason why it should be abhorred, not only by Him, but by all creatures for ever, it is grieved to see in itself reasons for deserving to be cast out by Him for Whom it has such great love and desire.

## CHAPTER VIII

*Of other pains which afflict the soul in this state.*<sup>2</sup>

**B**UT there is another thing here<sup>3</sup> that afflicts and distresses the soul greatly, which is that, as this dark night has hindered its faculties and affections in this way, it is unable to raise<sup>4</sup> its affection or its mind to God, neither can it pray to Him, thinking, as Jeremias thought concerning himself, that God has set a cloud before it through which its prayer cannot pass.<sup>5</sup> For it is this that is meant by that which is said in the passage referred to, namely: 'He hath shut and enclosed my paths with square stones.'<sup>6</sup> And if it sometimes prays it does so with such lack of strength and of sweetness<sup>7</sup> that it thinks that God neither hears it nor pays heed to it, as this Prophet likewise declares in the same passage, saying: 'When I cry and entreat, He hath shut out my prayer.'<sup>8</sup> In truth this is no time for the soul to speak with God; it should rather put its mouth in the dust, as Jeremias says, so that perchance there may come to it some present hope,<sup>9</sup> and it may endure its purgation with patience.<sup>10</sup> It is God Who is passively<sup>11</sup> working here in the soul; wherefore the soul can do nothing. Hence it can neither pray nor pay attention when it is present at the Divine offices,<sup>12</sup> much less can it

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'when it sees itself to be so miserable, suspecting that God loves it not, and having then no certainty that there is anything in it worthy of love but rather . . .'

<sup>2</sup> So e.p. The Codices have no title.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'There is in this state another thing.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds here: 'as before.'

<sup>5</sup> Lamentations iii, 44.

<sup>6</sup> [Lamentations iii, 9.] E.p. omits 'shut and' and reads 'roads' for 'paths.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'with such aridity and lack of sweetness.'

<sup>8</sup> Lamentations iii, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Lamentations iii, 29.

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: 'In truth, this is the time to put, as Jeremias says, its mouth in the dust, enduring its purgation with patience.'

<sup>11</sup> E.p. omits 'passively.'

<sup>12</sup> [*Lit.*, 'at the Divine things.'] Thus A, B, C, G, Mtr., P. M, e.p.: 'pay great attention.' H: 'present at the Divine things.' Bz.: 'present with devotion at the Divine things.'

attend to other things and affairs which are temporal. Not only so, but it has likewise such distractions and times of such profound forgetfulness of the memory that frequent periods pass by without its knowing what it has been doing or thinking, or what it is that it is doing or is going to do, neither can it pay attention, although it desire to do so, to anything that occupies it.<sup>1</sup>

2. Inasmuch as not only is the understanding here purged of its light,<sup>2</sup> and the will of its affections, but the memory is also purged of meditation and knowledge, it is well that it be likewise annihilated with respect to all these things, so that that which David says of himself in this purgation may be fulfilled, namely: 'I was annihilated and I knew not.'<sup>3</sup> This unknowing refers<sup>4</sup> to these follies and forgetfulnesses of the memory, which distractions and forgetfulnesses are caused by the interior recollection wherein this contemplation absorbs the soul. For, in order that the soul may be divinely prepared and tempered with its faculties for the Divine union of love, it would be well for it to be first of all absorbed, with all its faculties, in this Divine and dark spiritual light of contemplation, and thus to be withdrawn from all the affections and apprehensions of the creatures, which condition ordinarily<sup>5</sup> continues in proportion to its intensity. And thus, the simpler and the purer is this Divine light in its assault upon the soul, the more does it darken it, void it and annihilate it according to its particular apprehensions and affections, with regard both to things above and to things below; and similarly, the less simple and pure is it in this assault, the less deprivation it causes it and the less dark is it. Now this is a thing that seems incredible, to say that, the brighter and purer is supernatural and Divine light, the more it darkens the soul, and that, the less bright and pure is it, the less dark it is to the soul. Yet this may readily be understood<sup>6</sup> if we consider what has been proved above by the dictum of the philosopher—namely, that the brighter and the more manifest in themselves are supernatural things the darker are they to our understanding.<sup>7</sup>

3. And, to the end that this may be understood the more clearly, we shall here set down a similitude referring to common and natural

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'nor can it be very attentive, although it desire to be so, to anything that it is doing.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'of its imperfect knowledge.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxxii, 22 [A.V., lxxiii, 22].

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'extends.'

<sup>5</sup> So M, e.p. The Codices have 'singularly.'

<sup>6</sup> The words 'this may readily be understood,' which are necessary to complete the sense of the passage, are only found in e.p. and Mtr.

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits the next paragraph, doubtless because the same comparison has already been used in the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, chap. xiv, § 9 (p. 115, above).

light. We observe that a ray of sunlight which enters through the window is the less clearly visible according as it is the purer and freer from specks, and the more of such specks and motes there are in the air, the brighter is the light to the eye. The reason is that it is not the light itself that is seen; the light is but the means whereby the other things that it strikes are seen, and then it is also seen itself, through its reflection in them; were it not for this, neither it nor they would have been seen. Thus if the ray of sunlight entered through the window of one room and passed out through another on the other side, traversing the room, and if it met nothing on the way, or if there were no specks in the air for it to strike, the room would have no more light than before, neither would the ray of light be visible. In fact, if we consider it carefully, there is more darkness where the ray is, since it absorbs and obscures any other light, and yet it is itself invisible, because, as we have said, there are no visible objects which it can strike.

4. Now this is precisely what this Divine ray of contemplation does in the soul. Assailing it with its Divine light, it transcends the natural power of the soul, and herein it darkens it and deprives it of all natural affections and apprehensions which it apprehended aforetime by means of natural light; and thus it leaves it<sup>1</sup> not only dark, but likewise empty, according to its faculties and desires, both spiritual and natural. And, by thus leaving it empty and in darkness, it purges and illumines it with Divine spiritual light, although the soul thinks not that it has this light, but believes itself to be in darkness, even as we have said of the ray of light, which, although it be in the midst of the room, yet, if it be pure and meet nothing on its path, is not visible. With regard, however, to this spiritual light by which the soul is assailed, when it has something to strike—that is, when something spiritual presents itself to be understood, however small a speck it be and whether of perfection or imperfection, or whether it be a judgment of the falsehood or the truth of a thing<sup>2</sup>—it then sees and understands much more clearly than before it was in these dark places. And exactly in the same

<sup>1</sup> E.p. greatly modifies the first part of this paragraph, thus:

'And thus, the ray of this lofty contemplation assails the soul with its Divine light, and, since it transcends the natural power of the soul itself, darkens it and deprives it of all the natural apprehensions and affections which it apprehended aforetime by means of natural light. Whereby it leaves it,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. has: '... even as we have said. But even as the ray of light, if it be pure and have nothing to strike or to meet, is hardly perceived, and when it strikes or reflects is the better seen, even so this spiritual light whereby the soul is assailed, since it is so pure, is not in itself observed or perceived; but when it has something to strike—that is, when some particular thing presents itself to be understood, of perfection, or judgment of the falsehood or truth of a thing,' etc.

way it discerns the spiritual light which it has in order that it may readily discern the imperfection which is presented to it; even as, when the ray of which we have spoken, within the room, is dark and not itself visible, if one introduce<sup>1</sup> a hand or any other thing into its path, the hand is then seen and it is realized that that sunlight is present.

5. Wherefore, since this spiritual light is so simple,<sup>2</sup> pure and general, not appropriated or restricted to any particular thing that can be understood, whether natural or Divine (since with respect to all these apprehensions the faculties of the soul are empty and annihilated), it follows that<sup>3</sup> with great comprehensiveness and readiness the soul discerns and penetrates whatsoever thing presents itself to it, whether it come from above or from below; for which cause the Apostle said: That the spiritual man searches all things, even the deep things of God.<sup>4</sup> For by this general and simple wisdom is understood that which the Holy Spirit says through the Wise Man, namely: That it reaches wheresoever it wills by reason of its purity;<sup>5</sup> that is to say, because it is not restricted to any particular object of the intellect or affection. And this is the characteristic of the spirit that is purged and annihilated with respect to all particular affections and objects of the understanding, that in this state wherein it has pleasure in nothing and understands nothing<sup>6</sup> in particular, but dwells in its emptiness, darkness and obscurity, it is fully prepared to embrace everything to the end that those words of Saint Paul may be fulfilled<sup>7</sup> in it: *Nihil habentes, et omnia possidentes*.<sup>8</sup> For such poverty of spirit as this would deserve such happiness.

## CHAPTER IX

*How, although this night brings darkness to the spirit, it does so in order to illumine it and give it light.*<sup>9</sup>

IT now remains to be said that, although this happy night brings darkness to the spirit, it does so only to give it light in everything; and that, although it humbles it and makes it miserable, it does so only to exalt it and to raise it up; and, although it impoverishes it and

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'even as when the ray is in itself not perceived, yet, if one introduce,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> H: 'so sensible.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'it follows that.'

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 10. [*Lit.*, 'penetrates all things.']

<sup>5</sup> Wisdom vii, 24.

<sup>6</sup> H omits: 'and understands nothing.'

<sup>7</sup> A, M, e.p. add 'mystically.'

<sup>8</sup> 2 Corinthians vi, 10.

<sup>9</sup> So e.p. The Codices have no title.

empties it of all natural affection and attachment, it does so only that it may enable it to stretch forward, divinely, and thus to have fruition and experience of all things, both above and below, yet to preserve its unrestricted liberty of spirit in them all. For just as the elements, in order that they may have a part in all natural entities and compounds, must have no particular colour, odour or taste, so as to be able to combine with all tastes, odours and colours, just so must the spirit be simple, pure and detached from all kinds of natural affection, whether actual or habitual, to the end that it may be able freely to share in the breadth of spirit of the Divine Wisdom, wherein, through its purity, it has experience of all the sweetness of all things in a certain pre-eminently excellent way.<sup>1</sup> And without this purgation it will be wholly unable to feel or experience the satisfaction of all this abundance of spiritual sweetness. For one single affection remaining in the spirit, or one particular thing to which, actually or habitually, it clings, suffices to hinder it from feeling or experiencing or communicating the delicacy and intimate sweetness of the spirit of love, which contains within itself all sweetness to a most eminent degree.<sup>2</sup>

2. For, even as the children of Israel, solely because they retained one single affection and remembrance—namely, with respect to the fleshpots and the meals which they had tasted in Egypt<sup>3</sup>—could not relish the delicate bread of angels, in the desert, which was the manna, which, as the Divine Scripture says, held sweetness for every taste and turned to the taste that each one desired;<sup>4</sup> even so the spirit cannot succeed in enjoying the delights of the spirit of liberty, according to the desire of the will, if it be still affectioned to any desire, whether actual or habitual, or to particular objects of understanding, or to any other apprehension.<sup>5</sup> The reason for this is that the affections, feelings and apprehensions of the perfect spirit, being Divine,<sup>6</sup> are of another kind and of a very different order from those that are natural. They are pre-eminent,<sup>7</sup> so that, in order both actually and habitually to possess the one, it is needful to expel and annihilate the other, as with two contrary things, which cannot exist together in one person.<sup>8</sup> Therefore it is most fitting and necessary, if the soul is to pass to these great

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'with a certain eminence of excellence.'] So C, H, M, Mtr., P, V. A, B, e.p.: 'certain kind of excellence.' Bz. omits a line or so here.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, '... sweetness, with great eminence.']

<sup>3</sup> Exodus xvi, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Wisdom xvi, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Thus the Codices. E.p. has: 'any other limited apprehension.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'being so high and very specially Divine.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits the last three words.

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'as with . . . person.'

things, that this dark night of contemplation should first of all annihilate and undo it in its meannesses, bringing it into darkness, aridity, affliction and emptiness; for the light which is to be given to it is a Divine light of the highest kind, which transcends all natural light, and which by nature can find no place in the understanding.

3. And thus it is fitting that, if the understanding is to be united with that light and become Divine in the state of perfection, it should first of all be purged and annihilated as to its natural light, and, by means of this dark contemplation, be brought actually into darkness. This darkness should continue for as long as is needful in order to expel and annihilate the habit which the soul has long since formed in its manner of understanding, and the Divine light and illumination will then take its place. And thus, inasmuch as that power of understanding which it had aforetime is natural, it follows that the darkness which it here suffers is profound and horrible and most painful, for this darkness, being felt in the deepest substance of the spirit, seems to be substantial darkness.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, since the affection of love which is to be given to it in the Divine union of love is Divine, and therefore very spiritual, subtle and delicate, and very intimate, transcending every affection and feeling<sup>2</sup> of the will, and every desire thereof, it is fitting that, in order that the will may be able to attain to this Divine affection and most lofty delight, and to feel it and experience it<sup>3</sup> through the union of love, since it is not, in the way of nature, perceptible to the will,<sup>4</sup> it be first of all purged and annihilated in all its affections and feelings, and left in a condition of aridity and constraint, proportionate to the habit of natural affections which it had before, with respect both to Divine things and to human. Thus, being exhausted, withered and thoroughly tried<sup>5</sup> in the fire of this dark contemplation, and having driven away every kind<sup>6</sup> of evil spirit (as with the heart of the fish which Tobias set on the coals<sup>7</sup>), it may have a simple and pure disposition, and its palate may be purged and healthy, so that it may feel

<sup>1</sup> E.p. reads: '... painful, for it touches, and is felt in, the depths of the spirit.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'every natural and imperfect affection and feeling.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'feel it and.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'since ... will.'

<sup>5</sup> So H. There are many variants. A: 'that it may be dry and withered and well proved.' B: 'that it may be dry, withered and well entangled (*sic*).'<sup>1</sup> [Probably a copyist's error: *entrecada* for *extricada*, 'wring.']] Bz.: 'that it may be withered and well bruised.' C, M, P: 'Thus, exhausted and withered and well wrung.' Mr.: 'that it may be withered and well wrung.' V: 'that it may be clean and withered and well wrung.' E.p.: 'Thus, exhausted, withered and deprived (of every kind, etc.).'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'from every kind.' But see Tobias viii, 2. The 'deprived' of e.p. gives the best reading of this phrase, but the general sense is clear from the Scriptural reference.]

<sup>7</sup> Tobias viii, 2.

the rare and sublime touches of Divine love, wherein it will see itself divinely transformed, and all the contrarieties, whether actual or habitual, which it had aforetime, will be expelled, as we are saying.

4. Moreover, in order to attain the said union to which this dark night is disposing and leading it, the soul must be filled and endowed with a certain glorious magnificence in its communion with God, which includes within itself innumerable blessings springing from delights which exceed all the abundance that the soul can naturally possess. For by nature the soul is so weak and impure that it cannot receive all this. As Isaias says: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, that which God hath prepared, etc.'<sup>1</sup> It is meet, then, that the soul be first of all brought into emptiness and poverty of spirit and purged from all help, consolation and natural apprehension with respect to all things, both above and below. In this way, being empty, it is able indeed to be poor in spirit and freed from the old man, in order to live that new and blessed life which is attained by means of this night, and which is the state of union with God.

5. And because the soul is to attain to the possession of a sense, and of a Divine knowledge, which is very generous and full of sweetness, with respect to things Divine and human, which fall not within the common experience and natural knowledge of the soul (because it looks on them with eyes as different from those of the past as spirit is different from sense<sup>2</sup> and the Divine from the human), the spirit must be straitened<sup>3</sup> and inured to hardships as regards its common and natural experience, and be brought by means of this purgative contemplation into great anguish and affliction, and the memory must be borne far from all agreeable and peaceful knowledge, and have an intimate<sup>4</sup> sense and feeling that it is making a pilgrimage and being a stranger to all things, so that it seems to it that all things are strange and of a different kind from that which they were wont to be. For this night is gradually drawing the spirit away from its ordinary and common experience of things and bringing it nearer the Divine sense, which is a stranger and an alien to all human ways. It seems now to the soul that it is going forth from its very self, with much affliction.<sup>5</sup> At other times it wonders if it is under a charm or a spell, and it goes about marvelling at the things that it sees and hears, which seem to it

<sup>1</sup> Isaias lxiv, 4 [1 Corinthians ii, 9]. E.p. adds: 'for those that love Him.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'as the light and grace of the Holy Spirit differ from sense.'

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'be made thin.']

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'a very intimate.'

<sup>5</sup> A, e.p.: '... human ways; so much so that it seems to the soul that it is going out from its very self.' So M, omitting the words 'much so.' B, Bz., C, H, V read as in the text.

very strange and rare, though they are the same that it was accustomed to experience aforetime. The reason of this is that the soul is now becoming alien and remote from common sense and knowledge of things, in order that, being annihilated in this respect, it may be informed with the Divine—which belongs rather to the next life than to this.

6. The soul suffers all these afflictive purgations<sup>1</sup> of the spirit to the end that it may be begotten anew in spiritual life by means of this Divine inflowing, and in these pangs may bring forth the spirit of salvation, that the saying of Isaias may be fulfilled: 'In Thy sight, O Lord, we have conceived, and we have been as in the pangs of labour, and we have brought forth the spirit of salvation.'<sup>2</sup> Moreover, since by means of this contemplative night the soul is prepared for the attainment of inward peace and tranquillity, which is of such a kind and so delectable that, as the Scripture<sup>3</sup> says, it passes all understanding,<sup>4</sup> it behoves the soul to abandon all its former peace. This was in reality no peace at all, since it was involved in imperfections; but to the soul aforementioned it appeared to be so, because it was following its own inclinations, which were for peace. It seemed, indeed, to be a twofold peace—that is, the soul believed that it had already acquired the peace of sense and that of spirit, for it found itself to be full of the spiritual abundance of this peace of sense and of spirit—as I say, it is still imperfect. First of all, then, it must be purged of that former peace and disquieted concerning it and withdrawn from it.<sup>5</sup> Even so was Jeremias when, in the passage which we quoted from him, he felt and lamented<sup>6</sup> thus, in order to express the calamities of this night that is past, saying: 'My soul is withdrawn and removed from peace.'<sup>7</sup>

7. This is a painful disturbance, involving many misgivings, imaginings and strivings which the soul has within itself, wherein, with the apprehension and realization of the miseries in which it sees itself, it fancies that it is lost and that its blessings have gone for ever. Wherefore the spirit experiences<sup>8</sup> pain and sighing so deep that they

<sup>1</sup> A, B, M, Mtr., P: 'all these afflictions and purgations.' Bz., C: 'affective purgations.'

<sup>2</sup> Isaias xxvi, 17–18.

<sup>3</sup> [P. Silverio reads, with] A, B, M: 'the gloss.' [This was probably what the Saint actually wrote.] Bz., C, H, Mtr., P [not understanding it] have: 'the Church' [*la Iglesia* for *la Glosa*]. V, e.p. [give the correct sense by reading]: 'the Scripture.'

<sup>4</sup> [Philippians iv. 7.]

<sup>5</sup> [We have here split up a parenthesis of about seventy words.] E.p. abbreviates: '[It seemed to be] a twofold peace, that is, of sense and spirit. First of all it must be purged that it may be disquieted concerning that imperfect peace, and withdrawn from it.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and wept.']

<sup>7</sup> Lamentations iii, 17.

<sup>8</sup> So C, H, Mtr., P, V. The other Codices and e.p. read: 'Wherefore there has entered into the spirit.'

cause it vehement spiritual groans and cries, to which at times it gives vocal expression; when it has the necessary strength and power it dissolves into tears, although this relief comes but seldom. David<sup>1</sup> describes this very aptly, in a Psalm, as one who has had experience of it, where he says: 'I was exceedingly afflicted and humbled; I roared with the groaning of my heart.'<sup>2</sup> This roaring implies great pain; for at times, with the sudden and acute remembrance of these miseries wherein the soul sees itself, pain and affliction rise up and surround it, and I know not how the affections of the soul could be described<sup>3</sup> save in the similitude of holy Job, when he was in the same trials, and uttered these words: 'Even as the overflowing of the waters, even so is my roaring.'<sup>4</sup> For just as at times the waters make such inundations that they overwhelm and fill everything, so at times this roaring and this affliction of the soul grow to such an extent that they overwhelm it and penetrate it completely, filling it with spiritual pain and anguish in all its deep affections and energies, to an extent surpassing all possibility of exaggeration.

8. Such is the work wrought in the soul by this night that hides the hopes of the light of day. With regard to this the prophet Job says likewise: 'In the night my mouth is pierced with sorrows and they that feed upon me sleep not.'<sup>5</sup> Now here by the mouth is understood the will, which is transpierced with these pains that tear the soul to pieces, neither ceasing nor sleeping, for the doubts and misgivings which transpierce the soul in this way never cease.<sup>6</sup>

9. Deep is this warfare and this striving, for the peace which the soul hopes for will be very deep; and the spiritual pain is intimate and delicate,<sup>7</sup> for the love which it will possess will likewise be very intimate and refined. The more intimate and the more perfect the finished work is to be and to remain, the more intimate, perfect and pure must be the labour; the firmer the edifice, the harder the labour.<sup>8</sup> Wherefore, as Job says, the soul is fading within itself, and its vitals are being consumed without any hope.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, because in the state of perfection toward which it journeys by means of this purgative night the soul

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'The royal prophet David.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xxxvii, 9 [A.V., xxxviii, 8].

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., '... sees itself, it arises and is surrounded with pain and affliction, the affections of the soul, that I know not how it could be described.' A confused, ungrammatical sentence, of which, however, the general meaning is not doubtful.] E.p. has: '... sees itself, the affections of the soul feels [*sic*] such pain and affliction.'

<sup>4</sup> Job iii, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Job xxx, 17.

<sup>6</sup> H: 'never sleep.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'and refined.'

<sup>8</sup> Some MSS. omit the words 'the labour,' but the meaning is evidently the same.

<sup>9</sup> Job. xxx, 16.

will attain to the possession and fruition of innumerable blessings, of gifts and virtues, both according to the substance of the soul and likewise<sup>1</sup> according to its faculties, it must needs see and feel itself withdrawn from them all and deprived of them all and be empty and poor without them;<sup>2</sup> and it must needs believe itself to be so far from them that it cannot persuade itself that it will ever reach them, but rather it must be convinced that all its good things are over. The words of Jeremias have a similar meaning in that passage already quoted, where he says: 'I have forgotten good things.'<sup>3</sup>

10. But let us now see the reason why this light of contemplation, which is so sweet and blessed to the soul that there is naught more desirable (for, as has been said above, it is the same wherewith the soul must be united and wherein it must find all the good things in the state of perfection that it desires), produces, when it assails the soul, these beginnings which are so painful and these effects which are so disagreeable, as we have here said.

11. This question is easy for us to answer, by explaining, as we have already done in part, that the cause of this is that, in contemplation and the Divine inflowing, there is naught that of itself can cause affliction, but that they rather cause great sweetness and delight, as we shall say hereafter.<sup>4</sup> The cause is rather the weakness and imperfection from which the soul then suffers, and the dispositions which it has in itself and which make it unfit for the reception of them. Wherefore, when<sup>5</sup> the said Divine light assails the soul, it must needs cause it to suffer after the manner aforesaid.

## CHAPTER X

*Explains this purgation fully by a comparison.<sup>6</sup>*

FOR the greater clearness of what has been said, and of what has still to be said, it is well to observe at this point that this purgative and loving knowledge or Divine light whereof we here speak acts upon the soul which it is purging and preparing for perfect

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits 'likewise.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and be empty . . . them.'

<sup>3</sup> Lamentations iii, 17.

<sup>4</sup> So Bz., C, H, Mr. A, B, M: 'as was [sic] afterwards given it.' E.p.: 'as will afterwards be given it.' V: 'as was said before.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. 'unfit [*lit.*, 'contrary': this also applies to our text] for the reception of that sweetness. And thus, when,' etc.

<sup>6</sup> So e.p. The Codices have no title.

union with it in the same way as fire acts upon a log of wood in order to transform it into itself; for material fire, acting upon wood, first of all begins to dry it,<sup>1</sup> by driving out its moisture and causing it to shed the water which it contains within itself. Then it begins to make it black, dark and unsightly, and even to give forth a bad odour,<sup>2</sup> and, as it dries it little by little, it brings out and drives away all the dark and unsightly accidents which are contrary to the nature of fire. And, finally, it begins to kindle it externally and give it heat, and at last transforms it into itself and makes it as beautiful as fire. In this respect, the wood has neither passivity nor activity of its own,<sup>3</sup> save for its weight, which is greater, and its substance, which is denser, than that of fire, for it has in itself<sup>4</sup> the properties and activities of fire. Thus it is dry and it dries; it is hot and heats; it is bright and gives brightness; and it is much less heavy than before. All these properties and effects are caused in it by the fire.

2. In this same way we have to philosophize with respect to this Divine fire of contemplative love, which, before it unites and transforms the soul in itself, first purges it of all its contrary accidents. It drives out its unsightliness, and makes it black and dark, so that it seems worse than before and more unsightly and abominable than it was wont to be.<sup>5</sup> For this Divine purgation is removing<sup>6</sup> all the evil and vicious humours which the soul has never perceived because they have been so deeply rooted and grounded in it; it has never realized, in fact, that it has had so much evil within itself. But now that they are to be driven forth and annihilated, these humours reveal themselves, and become visible to the soul because it is so brightly illumined by this dark light of Divine contemplation (although it is no worse than before, either in itself or in relation to God); and, as it sees in itself that which it saw not before, it is clear to it that not only is it unfit to be seen by God, but deserves His abhorrence, and that He does indeed abhor it. By this comparison<sup>7</sup> we can now understand many things concerning what we are saying and purpose to say.

3. First, we can understand how the very light and the loving wisdom which are to be united with the soul and to transform it are the same that at the beginning purge and prepare it: even as the very

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'to dry it up.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and . . . odour.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. has 'proper to wood' for 'of its own.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'which is less subtle than that of fire; it has in itself.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and more . . . to be.'

<sup>6</sup> V: 'is consuming and removing.'

<sup>7</sup> Bz., H, V erroneously read: 'By this contemplation.'

fire which transforms the log of wood into itself, and makes it part of itself, is that which at the first was preparing it for that same purpose.

4. Secondly, we shall be able to see how these afflictions are not felt by the soul as coming from the said Wisdom, since, as the Wise Man says, all good things together come to the soul with her.<sup>1</sup> They are felt as coming from the weakness and imperfection which belong to the soul; without such purgation, the soul cannot receive its Divine light, sweetness and delight, even as the log of wood, when the fire acts upon it, cannot immediately be transformed until it be made ready; wherefore the soul is greatly afflicted.<sup>2</sup> This statement is fully supported by the Preacher, where he describes all that he suffered in order that he might attain to union with wisdom and to the fruition of it, saying thus: 'My soul hath wrestled with her and my bowels were moved in acquiring her; therefore it shall possess<sup>3</sup> a good possession.'<sup>4</sup>

5. Thirdly, we can learn here incidentally in what manner souls are afflicted in purgatory. For the fire would have no power over them, even though they came into contact with it, if they had no imperfections for which to suffer.<sup>5</sup> These are the material upon which the fire of purgatory seizes; when that material is consumed there is naught else that can burn. So here, when the imperfections are consumed, the affliction of the soul ceases and its fruition remains.<sup>6</sup>

6. The fourth thing that we shall learn here is the manner wherein the soul, as it becomes purged and purified by means of this fire of love, becomes ever more enkindled in love,<sup>7</sup> just as the wood grows hotter in proportion as it becomes the better prepared by the fire. This enkindling of love, however, is not always felt by the soul, but only at times when contemplation assails it less vehemently, for then it has occasion to see, and even to enjoy, the work which is being wrought in it, and which is then revealed to it. For it seems that the worker takes his hand from the work, and draws the iron out of the furnace, in order that something of the work which is being done may be seen; and then there is occasion for the soul to observe in itself the good which it saw not while the work was going on. In the same way, when the flame ceases to attack the wood, it is possible to see how much of it has been enkindled.

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom vii, 11.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'wherefore the soul suffers greatly.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'therefore shall I acquire.'

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiasticus li, 28-9 [A.V., li, 19-21].

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'would have no power over them, if they were completely made ready to reign and be united with God in glory and had no faults for which to suffer.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. adds: 'of the kind that in this life is possible.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'enkindled therein.'

7. Fifthly, we shall also learn from this comparison what has been said above—namely, how true it is that after each of these periods of relief the soul suffers once again, more intensely and keenly than before. For, after that revelation just referred to has been made, and after<sup>1</sup> the more outward imperfections of the soul have been purified, the fire of love once again attacks that which has yet to be consumed and purified more inwardly. The suffering of the soul now becomes more intimate, subtle and spiritual, in proportion as the fire refines away the finer,<sup>2</sup> more intimate and more spiritual imperfections, and those which are most deeply rooted in its inmost parts. And it is here just as with the wood, upon which the fire, when it begins to penetrate it more deeply, acts with more force and vehemence<sup>3</sup> in preparing its most inward part to possess it.

8.<sup>4</sup> Sixthly, we shall likewise learn here the reason why it seems to the soul that all its good is over, and that it is full of evil, since naught comes to it at this time but bitterness; it is like the burning<sup>5</sup> wood, which is touched by no air nor by aught else than by consuming fire. But, when there occur other periods of relief like the first, the rejoicing of the soul will be more interior because the purification has been more interior also.

9. Seventhly,<sup>6</sup> we shall learn that, although the soul has the most ample<sup>7</sup> joy at these periods (so much so that, as we said, it sometimes thinks that its trials<sup>8</sup> can never return again, although it is certain that<sup>9</sup> they will return quickly), it cannot fail to realize, if it is aware (and at times it is made aware) of a root of imperfection which remains, that its joy is incomplete, because a new assault seems to be threatening it;<sup>10</sup> when this is so, the trial returns quickly. Finally, that which still remains to be purged and enlightened most inwardly cannot well be concealed from the soul in view of its experience of its former purification;<sup>11</sup> even as also in the wood it is the most inward part that remains longest unkindled,<sup>12</sup> and the difference between it and that which has

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'and when at last.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'more delicate.']

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'fury.']

<sup>4</sup> This paragraph is only found in the Codices.

<sup>5</sup> Several codices omit 'burning.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'Sixthly.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'intense.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. clarifies the sense of this passage by substituting for 'they' of the MSS., 'the trials.'

<sup>9</sup> Thus e.p. The other authorities have: 'yet when' [probably in the sense, however, of 'nevertheless,' as in our text].

<sup>10</sup> [The sudden change of metaphor is the author's. The 'assault' is, of course, the renewed growth of the 'root.']

<sup>11</sup> [*Lit.*, '... from the soul, with regard to that which has already been purified.']

<sup>12</sup> [*Lit.*, 'not enlightened': the word is the same as that used just above.]

already been purged is clearly perceptible; and, when this purification once more assails it most inwardly, it is no wonder if it seems to the soul once more that all its good is gone, and that it never expects to experience it again, for, now that it has been plunged into these most inward sufferings, all good coming from without is over.<sup>1</sup>

10. Keeping this comparison, then, before our eyes, together with what has already been said upon the first line of the first stanza concerning this dark night and its terrible properties, it will be well to leave these sad experiences of the soul and to begin to speak of the fruit of its tears and their blessed properties, whereof the soul begins to sing from this second line:

**Kindled in love<sup>2</sup> with yearnings.**

## CHAPTER XI

*Begins to explain the second line of the first stanza. Describes how, as the fruit of these rigorous constraints, the soul finds itself with the vehement passion of Divine love.<sup>3</sup>*

**I**N this line the soul describes the fire of love which, as we have said, like the material fire acting upon the wood, begins to take hold upon the soul in this night of painful contemplation. This enkindling now described, although in a certain way it resembles that which we described above as coming to pass in the sensual part of the soul, is in some ways as different from that other as is the soul from the body, or the spiritual part from the sensual. For this present kind is an enkindling of spiritual love in the soul, which, in the midst of these dark confines, feels itself to be keenly and sharply wounded in strong Divine love, and to have a certain realization and foretaste of God, although it understands nothing definitely, for, as we say, the understanding is in darkness.

2. The spirit feels itself here to be deeply and passionately in love, for this spiritual enkindling produces the passion of love. And, inasmuch as this love is infused, it is passive rather than active,<sup>4</sup> and thus

<sup>1</sup> [The word translated 'over' is rendered 'gone' just above.] So A, B, M. [P. Silverio reads, with] Bz., C, H, Mtr., V: 'blinded' [i.e., 'is shut out from it']. E.p.: 'is hidden from it.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Zir.*, 'in loves'; and so throughout the exposition of this line.]

<sup>3</sup> So e.p. The Codices make no division here.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: '... is infused, the soul here concurs rather with its passive aspect.'

it begets in the soul a strong passion of love. This love has in it something of union with God, and thus to some degree partakes of its properties, which are actions of God rather than of the soul, these being subdued within it passively. What the soul does here is to give its consent; the warmth and strength<sup>1</sup> and temper and passion of love—or enkindling, as the soul here calls it—belong<sup>2</sup> only to the love of God, which enters increasingly into union with it. This love finds in the soul more occasion and preparation to unite itself with it and to wound it, according as all the soul's desires are the more recollected,<sup>3</sup> and are the more withdrawn from and disabled for the enjoyment of aught either in Heaven or in earth.

3. This takes place to a great extent, as has already been said, in this dark purgation, for God has so weaned all the inclinations<sup>4</sup> and caused them to be so recollected<sup>5</sup> that they cannot find pleasure in anything they may wish. All this is done by God to the end that, when He withdraws them and recollects them in Himself, the soul may have more strength and fitness to receive this strong union of love of God, which He is now beginning to give it through this purgative way, wherein the soul must love with great strength and with all its desires and powers both of spirit and of sense; which could not be if they were dispersed in the enjoyment of aught else. For this reason David said to God, to the end that he might receive the strength of the love of this union with God: 'I will keep my strength for Thee';<sup>6</sup> that is, I will keep the entire capacity and all the desires and energies of my faculties, nor will I employ their operation or pleasure in aught else than Thyself.

4. In this way it can be realized in some measure how great and how strong may be this enkindling of love in the spirit, wherein God keeps in recollection all the energies, faculties and desires of the soul, both of spirit and of sense, so that all this harmony may employ its energies and virtues in this love, and may thus attain to a true fulfilment of the first commandment, which sets aside nothing pertaining to man nor excludes from this love anything that is his, but says: 'Thou shalt love

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'which are more especially actions of God received in the soul than of the soul itself, the soul giving them its simple and loving consent. Yet the warmth and strength,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'cling,' 'adhere.']

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'shut up.']

<sup>4</sup> A, B, M have 'unbound' for 'weaned.' E.p. reads: 'for God has so weaned all the faculties.'

<sup>5</sup> [Here, and below, the original has *recogidos*, the word normally translated 'recollected.']

<sup>6</sup> Psalm lvi, 10 [A.V., lix, 9].

thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind, with all thy soul and with all thy strength.<sup>1</sup>

5. When all the desires and energies of the soul, then, have been recollected in this enkindling of love, and when the soul itself has been touched and wounded in them all, and has been inspired with passion, what shall we understand the movements and digressions<sup>2</sup> of all these energies and desires to be, if they find themselves enkindled and wounded with strong love and without the possession and satisfaction thereof, in darkness and doubt? They will doubtless be suffering hunger, like the dogs of which David speaks as running about the city<sup>3</sup>; finding no satisfaction in this love, they keep howling and groaning. For the touch<sup>4</sup> of this love and Divine fire dries up the spirit and enkindles its desires,<sup>5</sup> in order to satisfy its thirst for this Divine love, so much so that it turns upon itself a thousand times and desires God in a thousand ways and manners, with the eagerness and desire of the appetite. This is very well explained by David in a psalm, where he says: 'My soul thirsted for Thee: in how many manners does my soul long for Thee!'<sup>6</sup>—that is, in desires. And another version reads: 'My soul thirsted for Thee, my soul is lost (*or* perishes) for Thee.'

6. It is for this reason that the soul says in this line that it was 'kindled in love with yearnings.'<sup>7</sup> For in all the things and thoughts that it revolves within itself, and in all the affairs and matters that present themselves to it, it loves in many ways, and also desires and suffers in the desire in many ways, at all times and in all places, finding rest in naught, and feeling this yearning in its enkindled wound,<sup>8</sup> even as the prophet Job declares, saying: 'As the hart<sup>9</sup> desireth the shadow, and as the hireling desireth the end of his work, so I also had vain months and numbered to myself wearisome and laborious nights. If I lie down to sleep, I shall say: "When shall I arise?" And then I shall await the evening and shall be full of sorrows even until the darkness of night.'<sup>10</sup> Everything becomes cramping to this soul: it cannot live<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy vi, 5.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'and affections.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lviii, 15-16 [A.V., lix, 14-15].

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: '... and without satisfaction thereof, in darkness thereof and doubt? Suffering greater hunger, doubtless, as they have greater experience of God. For the touch.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'its affections.'

<sup>6</sup> Psalm lxii, 2 [A.V., lxiii, 1].

<sup>7</sup> [Lit., as in the verses, 'in loves.'] Bz. adds: 'and says not "kindled in love with yearning."' H has: 'and says not "kindled in love and with yearning."'

<sup>8</sup> Thus the Codices. E.p. has: 'feeling this yearning enkindled and wounded.'

<sup>9</sup> [For *ciervo*, hart, read *siervo*, servant, and we have the correct quotation from Scripture. The change, however, was evidently made by the Saint knowingly. In P. Gerardo's edition, the Latin text, with *cervus*, precedes the Spanish translation, with *ciervo*.]

<sup>10</sup> Job vii, 2-4.

<sup>11</sup> [*No cabe lit.*, 'it cannot be contained,' 'there is no room for it.']

within itself; it cannot live either in Heaven or on earth; and it is filled with griefs until the darkness comes to which Job here refers, speaking spiritually and in the sense of our interpretation. What the soul here endures is affliction<sup>1</sup> and suffering without the consolation of a certain hope of any light and spiritual good. Wherefore the yearning and the grief of this soul in this enkindling of love are greater because it is multiplied in two ways: first, by the spiritual darkness wherein it finds itself, which afflicts it with its doubts and misgivings; and then by the love of God, which enkindles and stimulates it, and, with its loving wound, causes it a wondrous fear.<sup>2</sup> These two kinds of suffering at such a season are well described by Isaias, where he says: 'My soul desired Thee in the night'<sup>3</sup>—that is, in misery.

7. This is one kind of suffering which proceeds from this dark night; but, he goes on to say, with my spirit, in my bowels, until the morning, I will watch for Thee. And this is the second way of grieving in desire and yearning which comes from love in the bowels of the spirit, which are the spiritual affections. But in the midst of these dark and loving afflictions the soul feels within itself a certain companionship and strength, which bears it company and so greatly strengthens it that, if this burden of grievous darkness be taken away, it often feels itself to be alone, empty and weak. The cause of this is that, as the strength and efficacy of the soul were derived and communicated passively from the dark fire of love which assailed it, it follows that, when that fire ceases to assail it, the darkness and power and heat of love cease in the soul.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> B, H, M: 'is expectation.'

<sup>2</sup> *Atemoriça* [evidently having puzzled the editor] is changed in e.p. into *atiça* ['stirs up'—the word used for poking the fire. I cannot think that the emendation, which repeats the idea of *estimula* above and finds no support in any MS., is worth adopting].

<sup>3</sup> Isaias xxvi, 9.

<sup>4</sup> H reads only: 'the darkness ceases.'

## CHAPTER XII

*Shows how this horrible night is purgatory, and how in it the Divine wisdom illumines men on earth with the same illumination that purges and illumines the angels in Heaven.<sup>1</sup>*

FROM what has been said we shall be able to see how this dark night of loving fire, as it purges in the darkness, so also in the darkness enkindles the soul. We shall likewise be able to see that, even as spirits<sup>2</sup> are purged in the next life with dark material fire, so in this life they are purged and cleansed with the dark spiritual fire of love. The difference is that in the next life they are cleansed with fire, while here below they are cleansed and illumined with love only. It was this love that David entreated, when he said: *Cor mundum crea in me, Deus*, etc.<sup>3</sup> For cleanness of heart is nothing less than the love and grace of God. For the clean of heart are called by our Saviour 'blessed'; which is as if He had called them 'enkindled with love',<sup>4</sup> since blessedness is given by nothing less than love.

2. And Jeremias well shows how the soul is purged when it is illumined with this fire of loving wisdom (for God never grants mystical wisdom without love, since love itself infuses it), where he says: 'He hath sent fire into my bones, and hath taught me.'<sup>5</sup> And David says that the wisdom of God is silver tried in fire<sup>6</sup>—that is, in purgative fire of love. For this dark contemplation infuses into the soul love and wisdom jointly, to each one according to his capacity and need, enlightening the soul and purging it, in the words of the Wise Man, from its ignorances, as he said was done to himself.

3. From this we shall also infer that the very wisdom of God which purges these souls and illumines them<sup>7</sup> purges the angels from their ignorances, giving them knowledge, enlightening them as to that which they knew not,<sup>8</sup> and flowing down from God through the first hierarchies even to the last, and thence to men.<sup>9</sup> All the works, therefore, which are done by the angels, and all their inspirations, are said

<sup>1</sup> Chapter-heading and title are from e.p. The Codices make no division here.

<sup>2</sup> A, B: 'even as sins.' E.p.: 'even as the predestinate.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm I, 12 [A.V., li, 10].

<sup>4</sup> [Lit. 'enamoured.']

<sup>5</sup> Lamentations i, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm xi, 7 [A.V., xii, 6].

<sup>7</sup> The Codices omit the words 'purges . . . them', which are supplied by e.p.

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'giving . . . knew not.'

<sup>9</sup> The Schoolmen frequently assert that the lower angels are purged and illumined by the higher. Cf. St. Thomas, *Summa*, I, q. 106, a. 1, ad. 1.

in the Scriptures, with truth and propriety, to be the work of God and of themselves; for ordinarily these inspirations come through the angels, and they receive them likewise one from another without any delay—as quickly as a ray of sunshine is communicated through many windows arranged in order. For although it is true that the sun's ray itself passes through them all, still each one passes it on and infuses it into the next, in a modified form, according to the nature of the glass, and with rather more or rather less power and brightness, according as it is nearer to the sun or farther from it.

4. Hence it follows that, the nearer to God are the higher spirits and the lower,<sup>1</sup> the more completely are they purged and enlightened with more general purification; and that the lowest of them will receive this illumination<sup>2</sup> very much less powerfully and more remotely. Hence it follows that man, who is the lowest of all those to whom this loving contemplation flows down continually from God, will, when God desires to give it him, receive it perforce after his own manner in a very limited way and with great pain.<sup>3</sup> For, when the light of God illumines an angel, it enlightens him and enkindles<sup>4</sup> him in love, since, being pure spirit, he is prepared for that infusion. But, when it illumines man, who is impure and weak, it illumines him, as has been said above, according to his nature. It plunges him into darkness and causes him affliction and distress, as does the sun to the eye that is weak;<sup>5</sup> it enkindles him<sup>6</sup> with passionate yet afflictive love, until he be spiritualized and refined by this same fire of love; and it purifies him until he can receive with sweetness the union<sup>7</sup> of this loving infusion after the manner of the angels, being now purged, as by the help of the Lord we shall explain later.<sup>8</sup> But meanwhile he receives this contemplation and loving knowledge in the constraint and yearning of love of which we are here speaking.

5. This enkindling and yearning of love are not always perceived by the soul. For in the beginning, when this spiritual purgation commences, all this Divine fire is used in drying up and making ready the

<sup>1</sup> So e.p. The MSS. have: 'and those below.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'this enlightenment.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. modifies thus: 'Hence it follows that, since man is lower than the angels, when God will give him this contemplation, he will perforce receive it after his manner, in a more limited way and with greater pain.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and softens.']

<sup>5</sup> [More literally, 'is sick.'] So most MSS. and e.p. Bz.: 'impure and sick.' H: 'bleared and sick.'

<sup>6</sup> A, e.p.: 'it enlightens him.'

<sup>7</sup> A, B, M: 'the infusion.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. adds: 'For there are souls who in this life have received more perfect illumination than the angels.'

wood (which is the soul) rather than in giving it heat. But, as time goes on,<sup>1</sup> the fire begins to give heat to the soul, and the soul then very commonly feels this enkindling and heat of love. Further, as the understanding is being more and more purged by means of this darkness, it sometimes comes to pass that this mystical and loving theology, as well as enkindling the will, strikes and illumines the other faculty also—that of the understanding—with a certain Divine light and knowledge, so delectably and delicately<sup>2</sup> that it aids the will to conceive a marvellous fervour, and, without any action of its own,<sup>3</sup> there burns in it this Divine fire of love, in living flames, so that it now appears to the soul a living fire by reason of the living understanding which is given to it. It is of this that David speaks in a Psalm, saying: 'My heart grew hot within me, and, as I meditated, a certain fire was enkindled.'<sup>4</sup>

6. This enkindling of love, which accompanies the union of these two faculties, the understanding and the will, which are here united,<sup>5</sup> is for the soul a thing of great richness and delight; for it is a certain touch of the Divinity and is already the beginning<sup>6</sup> of the perfection of the union of love for which it hopes. Now the soul attains not to this touch of so sublime a sense and love of God, save when it has passed through many trials and a great part of its purgation. But for other touches which are much lower than these, and which are of ordinary occurrence, so much purgation is not needful.

7.<sup>7</sup> From what we have said it may here be inferred how in these spiritual blessings, which are passively infused by God into the soul, the will may very well love even though the understanding understand not; and similarly the understanding may understand and the will love not. For, since this dark night of contemplation consists of Divine light and love, just as fire contains light and heat, it is not unbecoming that, when this loving light is communicated, it should strike the will at times more effectively by enkindling it with love and leaving the understanding in darkness instead of striking it with light; and, at other times, by enlightening it with light, and giving it understanding, but leaving the will in aridity (as it is also true that the heat of the fire

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'as time goes on.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'and divinely.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'without . . . its own.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xxxviii, 4 [A.V., xxxix, 3].

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'which are here united.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the beginnings.'] E.p.: 'for it is certain that in this darkness it already has the beginnings.'

<sup>7</sup> The whole of this paragraph is omitted in e.p.

can be received without the light being seen, and also the light of it can be seen without the reception of heat); and this is wrought by the Lord, Who infuses as He wills.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XIII

*Of other delectable effects which are wrought in the soul by this dark night of contemplation.*<sup>2</sup>

THIS type of enkindling will explain to us certain of the delectable effects which this dark night of contemplation works in the soul. For at certain times, as we have just said, the soul becomes enlightened in the midst of all this darkness, and the light shines in the darkness;<sup>3</sup> this mystical intelligence flows down into the understanding and the will remains in dryness—I mean, without actual union of love, with a serenity<sup>4</sup> and simplicity which are so delicate and delectable to the sense of the soul that no name can be given to them. Thus the presence of God is felt, now after one manner, now after another.

2. Sometimes, too, as has been said, it wounds the will at the same time, and enkindles love sublimely, tenderly and strongly; for we have already said that at certain times these two faculties, the understanding and the will, are united, when, the more they see,<sup>5</sup> the more perfect and delicate is the purgation of the understanding. But, before this state is reached, it is more usual for the touch of the enkindling of love to be felt in the will than for the touch of intelligence<sup>6</sup> to be felt in the understanding.

3.<sup>7</sup> But one question arises here, which is this: Why, since these two faculties are being purged together; are the enkindling and the love of purgative contemplation at first more commonly felt in the

<sup>1</sup> The Saint here treats a question often debated by philosophers and mystics—that of love and knowledge. Cf. also *Spiritual Canticle*, Stanza XVII (Vol. II, below), and *Living Flame*, Stanza III (Vol. III, below). Philosophers generally maintain that it is impossible to love without knowledge, and equally so to love more of an object than what is known of it. Mystics have, however, their own solutions of the philosophers' difficulty and the speculative Spanish mystics have much to say on the matter. (Cf., for example, the *Médula Mística*, Trat. V, Chap. iv, and the *Escuela de Oración*, Trat. XII, Duda v.)

<sup>2</sup> So e.p. The Codices make no division.

<sup>3</sup> St. John i, 5.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'this mystical intelligence flows directly into the understanding and the will to some extent partakes of it, with a serenity,' etc.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits these four words, which are found in A, M, B, Bz., C, H, Mtr., V have: 'the more they go.' P: 'the more this is so.' [P. Gerardo follows P, which certainly best agrees with the general sense of the passage.]

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'of perfect intelligence.'

E.p. omits this paragraph.

will than the intelligence thereof is felt in the understanding? To this it may be answered that this passive love does not now directly strike the will, for the will is free, and this enkindling of love is a passion of love rather than the free act of the will; for this heat of love strikes the substance of the soul and thus moves the affections passively. And so this is called passion of love rather than a free act of the will, an act of the will being so called only in so far as it is free. But these passions and affections subdue the will, and therefore it is said that, if the soul conceives passion with a certain affection, the will conceives passion; and this is indeed so, for in this manner the will is taken captive and loses its liberty, according as the impetus and power of its passion carry it away. And therefore we can say that this enkindling of love is in the will—that is, it enkindles the desire of the will; and thus, as we say, this is called passion of love rather than the free work of the will. And, because the receptive passion of the understanding can receive intelligence only in a detached and passive way (and this is impossible without its having been purged), therefore until this happens the soul feels the touch of intelligence less frequently than that of the passion of love. For it is not necessary to this end that the will should be so completely purged with respect to the passions, since these very passions help it to feel impassioned love.

4. This enkindling and thirst of love, which in this case belongs to the spirit, is very different from that other which we described in writing of the night of sense. For, though the sense has also its part here, since it fails not to participate in the labour of the spirit, yet the source and the keenness of the thirst of love is felt in the superior part of the soul—that is, in the spirit. It feels, and understands what it feels and its lack of what it desires, in such a way that all its affliction of sense, although greater without comparison than in the first night of sense, is as naught to it, because it recognizes within itself the lack of a great good which can in no way be measured.<sup>1</sup>

5. But here we must note that although, at the beginning, when this spiritual night commences, this enkindling of love is not felt, because this fire of love has not begun to take a hold,<sup>2</sup> God gives the soul, in place of it, an estimative love of Himself so great that, as we have said, the greatest sufferings and trials of which it is conscious in this night are the anguished thoughts that it<sup>3</sup> has lost God and the fears that He has abandoned it. And thus we may always say that from the very

<sup>1</sup> Bz., e.p.: 'be remedied.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'has not acted.'

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'the yearning to think if it.']

beginning of this night the soul is touched with yearnings of love, which is now that of estimation,<sup>1</sup> and now again, that of enkindling. And it is evident that the greatest suffering which it feels in these trials is this misgiving; for, if it could be certified at that time that all is not lost and over, but that what is happening to it is for the best—as it is—and that God is not wroth, it would care naught for all these afflictions, but would rejoice to know that God is making use of them for His good pleasure. For the love of estimation which it has for God is so great, even though it may not realize this and may be in darkness, that it would be glad,<sup>2</sup> not only to suffer in this way, but even to die many times over in order to give Him satisfaction. But when once the flame has enkindled the soul, it is wont to conceive, together with the estimation that it already has for God, such power and energy, and such yearning for Him, when He communicates to it the heat of love, that, with great boldness, it disregards everything and ceases to pay respect to anything, such are the power and the inebriation of love and desire. It regards not what it does, for<sup>3</sup> it would do strange and unusual things in whatever way and manner may present themselves, if thereby its soul might find Him Whom it loves.

6. It was for this reason that Mary Magdalene, though as greatly concerned for her own appearance as she was aforetime, took no heed<sup>4</sup> of the multitude of men who were at the feast,<sup>5</sup> whether they were of little or of great importance; neither did she consider that it was not seemly, and that it looked ill, to go and weep and shed tears among the guests, provided that, without delaying an hour or waiting for another time and season, she could reach Him for love of Whom her soul was already wounded and enkindled. And such is the inebriating power and the boldness<sup>6</sup> of love, that, though she knew her Beloved to be enclosed in the sepulchre by the great sealed stone, and surrounded by soldiers who were guarding Him lest His disciples should steal Him away,<sup>7</sup> she allowed none of these things to impede her, but went before day-break with the ointments to anoint Him.

7. And finally, this inebriating power and yearning of love caused

<sup>1</sup> [The word translated 'estimation' might also be rendered 'reverent love.' The 'love of estimation,' which has its seat in the understanding, is contrasted with the 'enkindling' or the 'love of desire,' which has its seat in the will. So elsewhere in this paragraph.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'it would be very glad,' etc.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'such are the power . . . what it does, for.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'Mary Magdalene, noble as she was, took no heed.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'at the feast which was given at the house of the Pharisee, as Saint Luke says.'

<sup>6</sup> H: 'and the superfluity.'

<sup>7</sup> St. John xx, 1 [St. Matthew xxvii, 62-6].

her to ask one whom she believed to be a gardener and to have stolen Him away from the sepulchre, to tell her, if he had taken Him, where he had laid Him, that she might take Him away;<sup>1</sup> considering not that such a question, according to independent judgment and reason, was foolish;<sup>2</sup> for it was evident that, if the other had stolen Him, he would not say so, still less would he allow Him to be taken away. It is a characteristic of the power and vehemence of love that all things seem possible to it, and it believes all men to be of the same mind as itself. For it thinks that there is naught wherein one may be employed, or which<sup>3</sup> one may seek, save that which it seeks itself and that which it loves; and it believes that there is naught else to be desired, and naught wherein it may be employed, save that one thing, which is pursued by all.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, when the Bride went out to seek her Beloved, through streets and squares,<sup>5</sup> thinking that all others were doing the same, she begged them that, if they found Him, they would speak to Him and say<sup>6</sup> that she was pining for love of Him.<sup>7</sup> Such was the power of the love of this Mary that she thought that, if the gardener would tell her where he had hidden Him, she would go and take Him away, however difficult it might be made for her.

8. Of this manner, then, are the yearnings of love whereof this soul becomes conscious when it has made some progress in this spiritual purgation. For it rises up by night (that is, in this purgative darkness) according to the affections of the will. And with the yearnings and vehemence of the lioness or the she-bear going to seek her cubs when they have been taken away from her and she finds them not, does this wounded soul go forth to seek its God. For, being in darkness, it feels itself to be without Him and to be dying of love for Him. And this is that impatient love wherein the soul cannot long subsist without gaining its desire or dying. Such was Rachel's desire for children when she said to Jacob: 'Give me children, else shall I die.'<sup>8</sup>

9. But we have now to see how it is that the soul which feels itself so miserable and so unworthy of God, here<sup>9</sup> in this purgative darkness, has nevertheless strength, and is sufficiently bold and daring, to journey towards union with God. The reason is that, as love continually gives it strength wherewith it may love indeed, and as the property of love is to desire to be united, joined and made equal and like to the object

<sup>1</sup> St. John xx, 15.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'or no other thing which.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'outskirts,' 'suburbs.']

<sup>7</sup> Canticles v, 8.

<sup>9</sup> E.p. has 'as it feels itself' for 'here.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'was not prudent.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: omits 'which . . . all.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'they would say of her.'

<sup>8</sup> Genesis xxx, 1.

of its love, that it may perfect itself in love's good things, hence it comes to pass that, when this soul is not perfected in love, through not having as yet attained to union, the hunger and thirst that it has for that which it lacks (which is union) and the strength set by love in the will which has caused it to become impassioned, make it bold and daring by reason of the enkindling of its will, although in its understanding, which is still dark and unenlightened,<sup>1</sup> it feels itself to be unworthy and knows itself to be miserable.

10. I will not here omit to mention the reason why this Divine light, which is always light to the soul, illumines it not as soon as it strikes it, as it does afterwards, but causes it the darkness and the trials of which we have spoken. Something has already been said concerning this, but the question must now be answered directly. The darkness and the other evils of which the soul is conscious when this Divine light strikes it are not darkness or evils caused by this light, but pertain to the soul itself, and the light illumines it so that it may see them. Wherefore it does indeed receive light from this Divine light; but the soul cannot see at first, by its aid, anything beyond what is nearest to it, or rather, beyond what is within it—namely, its darknesses or its miseries, which it now sees through the mercy of God, and saw not aforetime, because this supernatural light illumined it not. And this is the reason why at first it is conscious of nothing beyond darkness and evil; after it has been purged, however, by means of the knowledge and realization of these, it will have eyes to see, by the guidance of this light, the blessings of the Divine light; and, once all these darknesses and imperfections<sup>2</sup> have been driven out from the soul, it seems<sup>3</sup> that the benefits and the great blessings which the soul is gaining in this blessed night of contemplation become clearer.<sup>4</sup>

11. From what has been said, it is clear that God grants the soul in this state the favour of purging it and healing it with this strong lye of bitter purgation, according to its spiritual and its sensual part, of all the imperfect habits and affections which it had within itself with respect to temporal things and to natural, sensual<sup>5</sup> and spiritual things, its inward faculties being darkened, and voided of all these, its spiritual and sensual affections being constrained and dried up, and its natural

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'and unenlightened.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz., H, Mtr., P have 'impressions.' The other authorities read 'imperfections.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'it will have eyes to be shown the blessings of this Divine light, and once all these darknesses and these imperfections of the soul are driven out and taken away, it seems,' etc.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'become known.'

<sup>5</sup> H adds 'speculative.'

energies being attenuated and weakened with respect to all this (a condition which it could never attain of itself, as we shall shortly say). In this way God makes it to die to all that is not naturally<sup>1</sup> God, so that, once it is stripped and denuded of its former skin, He may begin to clothe it anew. And thus its youth is renewed like the eagle's and it is clothed with the new man, which, as the Apostle says, is created according to God.<sup>2</sup> This is naught else but His illumination of the understanding with supernatural light, so that it is no more a human understanding but becomes Divine through union with the Divine. In the same way the will is informed<sup>3</sup> with Divine love, so that it is a will that is now no less than Divine, nor does it love otherwise than divinely, for it is made and united in one with the Divine will and love. So, too, is it with the memory; and likewise the affections and desires are all changed and converted<sup>4</sup> divinely, according to God. And thus this soul will now be a soul of heaven, heavenly, and more Divine than human. All this, as we have been saying, and because of what<sup>5</sup> we have said, God continues to do and to work in the soul by means of this night, illuminating and enkindling it divinely with yearnings for God alone and for naught else whatsoever. For which cause the soul then very justly and reasonably adds the third line to the song, which says:<sup>6</sup>

. . . oh, happy chance!—  
I went forth without being observed.

## CHAPTER XIV

*Wherein are set down and explained the last three lines of the first stanza.<sup>7</sup>*

**T**HIS happy chance was the reason for which the soul speaks, in the next lines, as follows:

**I went forth without being observed, My house being  
now at rest.**

It takes the metaphor<sup>8</sup> from one who, in order the better to accomplish

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits 'naturally.'

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians iv, 24.

<sup>3</sup> Mtr., V, e.p.: 'enkindled.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'and converted.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'as will have been clearly seen from what.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: '... to the song, which, with the other lines, we shall set down and explain in the chapter following.'

<sup>7</sup> Thus e.p.

<sup>8</sup> E.p. modifies thus: 'The happy chance whereof the soul sings in the first of these three lines was the reason for which it says in the two following ... taking the metaphor,' etc.

something, leaves his house by night and in the dark, when those that are in the house are now at rest, so that none may hinder him. For this soul had to go forth to perform a deed so heroic and so rare—namely to become united with its Divine Beloved—and it had to leave its house, because the Beloved is not found save alone and without, in solitude. It was for this reason that the Bride desired to find Him alone, saying: ‘Who would give Thee to me, my brother,<sup>1</sup> that I might find Thee alone, without, and that my love might be communicated to Thee.’<sup>2</sup> It is needful for the enamoured soul, in order to attain to its desired end, to do likewise, going forth at night, when all the domestics in its house are sleeping and at rest—that is, when the low operations, passions and desires of the soul (who are the people of the household) are, because it is night, sleeping and at rest. When these are awake, they invariably hinder the soul from seeking its good, since they are opposed to its going forth in freedom. These are they of whom Our Saviour speaks in the Gospel, saying that they are the enemies of man.<sup>3</sup> And thus it would be meet that their operations and motions should be put to sleep in this night, to the end that they may not hinder the soul from attaining the supernatural blessings of the union of love of God, for, while these are alive and active, this cannot be.<sup>4</sup> For all their work and their natural<sup>5</sup> motions hinder, rather than aid, the soul’s reception of the spiritual blessings of the union of love, inasmuch as all natural ability is impotent with respect to the supernatural blessings that God, by means of His own infusion, bestows upon the soul passively, secretly and in silence. And thus it is needful that all the faculties should receive this infusion, and that, in order to receive it, they should remain passive,<sup>6</sup> and not interpose their own base acts and vile inclinations.

2. It was a happy chance for this soul that on this night God should put to sleep all the domestics in<sup>7</sup> its house—that is, all the faculties, passions, affections and desires which live in the soul, both sensually and spiritually. For thus it went forth ‘without being observed’—that is, without being hindered by these affections, etc., for they were put to sleep and mortified in this night, in the darkness of which they were left, that they might not notice or feel anything after their own low and natural manner, and might thus be unable to hinder the soul from going forth from itself and from the house of its sensuality. And

<sup>1</sup> A, B, M have: ‘my spouse, my brother.’

<sup>2</sup> Canticles viii, 1.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: ‘this cannot be attained.’

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: ‘and . . . passive.’

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew x, 36.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits ‘natural.’

<sup>7</sup> E.p. has ‘all the people of.’

thus only could the soul attain<sup>1</sup> to the spiritual union of perfect love of God.<sup>2</sup>

3. Oh, how happy a chance is this for the soul which can free itself from the house of its sensuality! None can understand it, unless, as it seems to me, it be the soul that has experienced it. For such a soul will see clearly how wretched was the servitude in which it lay and to how many miseries it was subject when it was at the mercy of its faculties and desires, and will know how the life of the spirit is true liberty and wealth, bringing with it inestimable blessings. Some of these we shall point out, as we proceed, in the following stanzas, wherein it will be seen more clearly what good reason the soul has to sing of<sup>3</sup> the happy chance of its passage from this dreadful night which has been described above.

## CHAPTER XV

*Sets down the second stanza and its exposition.*<sup>4</sup>

**In darkness and secure, By the secret ladder, disguised—oh,  
happy chance!  
In darkness and concealment, My house being now at rest.**

**I**N this stanza the soul still continues to sing of certain properties of the darkness of this night, reiterating how great is the happiness which came to it through them. It speaks of them in replying to a certain tacit objection, saying that<sup>5</sup> it is not to be supposed that, because in this night and darkness it has passed through so many tempests of afflictions, doubts, fears and horrors, as has been said, it has for that reason run any risk of being lost. On the contrary, it says, in the darkness of this night it has gained itself. For in the night it has freed itself and escaped subtly from its enemies, who were continually hindering its progress. For in the darkness of the night it changed its garments and disguised itself with three liveries and colours which we shall describe hereafter; and went forth by a very secret ladder, which none

<sup>1</sup> The verb 'could attain' is found in e.p. but, though necessary to the sense, is missing from all the MSS.

<sup>2</sup> So the MSS. E.p. modifies and shortens: 'which live in the sensual and spiritual soul, that it might attain to the spiritual union of perfect love of God "without being observed"—that is, without being hindered by them, because they were put to sleep and mortified in that night, as has been said.'

<sup>3</sup> A, P, e.p.: 'to relate.'

<sup>4</sup> So e.p. The Codices have only: 'Stanza the Second.' A, B have no heading.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'pointing out that.'

in the house knew, the which ladder, as we shall observe likewise in the proper place, is living faith. By this ladder the soul went forth in such complete hiding and concealment, in order the better to execute its purpose, that it could not fail to be in great security; above all since in this purgative night the desires, affections and passions of the soul are put to sleep, mortified and quenched, which are they that, when they were awake and alive, consented not to this.<sup>1</sup>

The first line, then, runs thus:<sup>2</sup>

**In darkness and secure.**

## CHAPTER XVI

*Explains how, though in darkness, the soul walks securely.*<sup>3</sup>

THE darkness which the soul here describes relates, as we have said, to the desires and faculties, sensual, interior and spiritual, for all these are darkened in this night as to their natural light, so that, being purged in this respect, they may be illumined with respect to the supernatural. For the spiritual and the sensual desires are put to sleep and mortified, so that they can experience<sup>4</sup> nothing, either Divine or human; the affections of the soul are oppressed and constrained, so that they can neither move nor find support in anything; the imagination is bound and can make no useful reflection; the memory is gone; the understanding is in darkness, unable to understand anything;<sup>5</sup> and hence the will likewise is arid and constrained and all the faculties are void and useless;<sup>6</sup> and in addition to all this a thick and heavy cloud is upon the soul, keeping it in affliction, and, as it were, far away from God.<sup>7</sup> It is in this kind of 'darkness' that the soul says here<sup>8</sup> it travelled 'securely.'

<sup>1</sup> Thus Bz., H, P. The other MSS. and e.p. have: 'they that, were they awake and alive, would not consent to this.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'The line, then, continues, and says thus.' In fact, however, the author is returning to the first line of the stanza.]

<sup>3</sup> So e.p.

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'taste.' E.p. adds 'delectably.']

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'unable to understand anything.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'and useless.'

<sup>7</sup> Some have considered this description exaggerated, but it must be borne in mind that all souls are not tested alike and the Saint is writing of those whom God has willed to raise to such sanctity that they drain the cup of bitterness to the dregs. We have already seen (Bk. I, chap. xiv, § 5) that 'all do not experience (this) after one manner . . . for (it) is meted out by the will of God, in conformity with the greater or the smaller degree of imperfection which each soul has to purge away, (and) in conformity, likewise, with the degree of love of union to which God is pleased to raise it' (p. 373, above).

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'It is in this kind of darkness that it says.'

2. The reason for this has been clearly expounded; for ordinarily the soul never strays save through its desires or its tastes or its reflections or its understanding or its affections; for as a rule it has too much or too little of these, or they vary or go astray, and hence the soul becomes inclined to that which behoves it not. Wherefore, when all these operations and motions are hindered, it is clear that the soul is secure against being led astray by them; for it is free, not only from itself, but likewise from its other enemies, which are the world and the devil. For when the affections and operations of the soul are quenched, these enemies cannot make war upon it by any other means or in any other manner.

3. It follows from this that, the greater is the darkness wherein the soul journeys and the more completely is it voided of its natural operations, the greater is its security. For, as the Prophet says,<sup>1</sup> perdition comes to the soul from itself alone—that is, from its sensual and interior desires and operations;<sup>2</sup> and good, says God, comes from Me alone. Wherefore, when it is thus hindered from following the things that lead it into evil, there will then come to it forthwith the blessings of union with God in its desires and faculties, which in that union He will make Divine and celestial. Hence, at the time of this darkness, if the soul considers the matter, it will see very clearly how little its desire and its faculties are being diverted to things that are useless and harmful; and how secure it is<sup>3</sup> from vainglory and pride and presumption, vain and false rejoicing and many other things. It follows clearly, then, that, by walking in darkness, not only is the soul not lost, but it has even greatly gained, since it is here gaining the virtues.

4. But there is a question which at once arises here—namely, since the things of God are of themselves profitable to the soul and bring it gain and security, why does God, in this night, darken the desires and faculties with respect to these good things likewise, in such a way that the soul can no more taste of them<sup>4</sup> or busy itself with them than with these other things, and indeed in some ways can do so less? The answer is that it is well for the soul to perform no operation touching spiritual things at that time and to have no pleasure in such things, because its faculties and desires are base, impure and wholly natural; and thus, although these faculties be given the desire and interest in things supernatural and Divine, they could not receive them save after

<sup>1</sup> Osee xiii, 9.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'not harmonized.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'to things that are useless and vain; and that it is secure,' etc.

<sup>4</sup> B, e.p.: 'can no more enjoy them.'

a base and a natural manner, exactly in their own fashion.<sup>1</sup> For, as the philosopher says, whatsoever is received comes to him that receives it after the manner of the recipient. Wherefore, since these natural faculties have neither purity nor strength nor capacity to receive and taste things that are supernatural after the manner of those things, which manner is Divine, but can do so only after their own manner, which is human and base, as we have said, it is meet that its faculties be in darkness concerning these Divine things likewise.<sup>2</sup> Thus, being weaned and purged and annihilated in this respect first of all, they may lose that base and human<sup>3</sup> way of receiving and acting, and thus all these faculties and desires of the soul may come to be prepared and tempered in such a way as to be able to receive, feel and taste that which is Divine and supernatural<sup>4</sup> after a sublime and lofty manner, which is impossible if the old man die not first of all.

5. Hence it follows that all spiritual things, if they come not from above and be not communicated by the Father of lights to human desire and free will (howsoever much a man may exercise his taste and faculties for God, and howsoever much it may seem to the faculties that they are experiencing these things), will not be experienced after a Divine and spiritual manner, but after a human and natural manner, just as other things are experienced, for spiritual blessings go not from man to God, but come from God to man.<sup>5</sup> With respect to this (if this were the proper place for it) we might here explain how there are many persons whose many tastes and affections and the operations of whose faculties are fixed upon God or upon spiritual things, and who may perhaps think that this is supernatural and spiritual, when it is perhaps no more than the most human<sup>6</sup> and natural desires<sup>7</sup> and actions. They regard these good things with the same disposition as they have for other things, by means of a certain natural facility which they possess for directing their desires and faculties to anything whatever.

6. If perchance we find<sup>8</sup> occasion elsewhere in this book, we shall

<sup>1</sup> E.p. modifies: 'that it is meet at that time for its operation and pleasure to be void as touching spiritual things; for its faculties and desires are base and impure; and thus, even though these faculties should be given desire and interest in things supernatural and Divine, they could not receive them save after a base manner.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... which manner is Divine, but after their own manner; it is meet that [its faculties] be in darkness concerning these Divine things likewise, for perfect purgation.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'and human.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'and supernatural.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. modifies: 'howsoever much the taste and desire of man and his faculties with respect to God be exercised, and howsoever much it may seem to them that they experience Him, they experience Him not in this way divinely and perfectly.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'than very human.'

<sup>7</sup> A, B, M read 'trials' [*aprietos*] for 'desires' [*apetitos*].

<sup>8</sup> A, B, P, e.p.: 'we have.'

treat of this, describing certain signs which indicate when the interior actions and motions of the soul, with respect to communion with God, are only natural, when they are spiritual, and when they are both natural and spiritual. It suffices for us here to know that, in order that the interior motions and acts of the soul may come to be moved by God divinely, they must first be darkened and put to sleep and hushed to rest naturally<sup>1</sup> as touching all their capacity and operation, until they have no more strength.

7. Therefore, O spiritual soul, when thou seest thy desire obscured, thy affections arid and constrained, and thy faculties bereft of their capacity for any interior exercise, be not afflicted by this, but rather consider it a great happiness, since God is freeing thee from thyself and taking the matter from thy hands. For with those hands, howsoever well they may serve thee, thou wouldst never labour so effectively, so perfectly and so securely (because of their clumsiness and uncleanness) as now, when God takes thy hand and guides thee in the darkness, as though thou wert blind, to an end and by a way which thou knowest not. Nor couldst thou ever hope to travel with the aid of thine own eyes and feet, howsoever good thou be as a walker.

8. The reason, again, why the soul not only travels securely, when it travels thus in the darkness, but also achieves even greater gain and progress, is that usually, when the soul is receiving fresh advantage and profit, this comes by a way that it least understands—indeed, it quite commonly believes that it is losing ground. For, as it has never experienced that new feeling which drives it forth and<sup>2</sup> dazzles it and makes it depart recklessly from its former way of life, it thinks itself to be losing ground rather than gaining and progressing, since it sees that it is losing with respect to that which it knew and enjoyed, and is going by a way which it knows not and wherein it finds no enjoyment. It is like the traveller, who, in order to go to new and unknown lands,<sup>3</sup> takes new roads, unknown and untried, and journeys unguided by his past experience, but doubtingly and according to what others say. It is clear that such a man could not reach new countries, or add to his past experience, if he went not along new and unknown roads and abandoned those which were known to him.<sup>4</sup> Exactly so, one who is

<sup>1</sup> A, e.p. [clarify the somewhat vague adverb by reading]: 'in that which is natural.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'drives it forth and.'

<sup>3</sup> M adds: 'and untried' and omits: 'takes . . . untried, and.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. modifies: 'unknown and untried by the report of any other person, and would clearly never reach new countries save by new and unknown roads, abandoning those which were known to him.'

learning fresh details concerning any office or art always proceeds in darkness, and receives no guidance from his original knowledge, for if he left not that behind he would get no farther nor make any progress; and in the same way, when the soul is making most progress, it is travelling in darkness, knowing naught. Wherefore, since God, as we have said, is the Master and Guide of this blind soul, it may well and truly rejoice, once it has learned to understand this, and say: 'In darkness and secure.'

9. There is another reason why the soul has walked securely in this darkness, and this is because it has been suffering; for the road of suffering is more secure and even more profitable than that of fruition and action: first, because in suffering the strength of God is added to that of man, while in action and fruition the soul is practising its own weaknesses and imperfections; and second, because in suffering the soul continues to practise and acquire the virtues and become purer, wiser and more cautious.

10. But there is another and a more important reason why the soul now walks in darkness and securely;<sup>1</sup> this emanates from the dark light or wisdom aforementioned. For in such a way does this dark night of contemplation absorb and immerse the soul in itself, and so near does it bring the soul to God, that it protects and delivers it from all that is not God. For this soul is now, as it were, undergoing a cure, in order that it may regain its health—its health being God Himself. His Majesty restricts it to a diet and abstinence from all things, and takes away its appetite for them all. It is like a sick man, who, if he is respected by those in his house, is carefully tended so that he may be cured; the air is not allowed to touch him, nor may he even enjoy the light, nor must he hear footsteps, nor yet the noise of those in the house; and he is given food that is very delicate, and even that only in great moderation—food that is nourishing rather than delectable.

11. All these particularities (which are for the security and safe-keeping of the soul) are caused by this dark contemplation, because it brings the soul nearer to God. For<sup>2</sup> the nearer the soul approaches Him, the blacker is the darkness which it feels and the deeper is the obscurity which comes through its weakness; just as, the nearer a man approaches the sun, the greater are the darkness and the affliction caused him through the great splendour of the sun and through the weakness and impurity<sup>3</sup> of his eyes. In the same way, so immense is

<sup>1</sup> A, e.p.: 'now, walking in darkness, walks securely.'

<sup>2</sup> A, e.p.: 'For, in truth.'

<sup>3</sup> A, e.p. add: 'and defectiveness.'

the spiritual light of God, and so greatly does it transcend our natural understanding, that the nearer we approach it, the more it blinds and darkens us. And this is the reason why, in Psalm xvii, David says that God made darkness His hiding-place and covering, and His tabernacle around Him dark water in the clouds of the air.<sup>1</sup> This dark water in the clouds of the air is dark contemplation and Divine wisdom in souls, as we are saying. They continue to feel it as a thing which is near Him, as the tabernacle wherein He dwells, when God brings them ever nearer to Himself. And thus, that which in God is supreme light and refulgence is to man blackest darkness, as Saint Paul says, according as David explains in the same Psalm, saying: 'Because of the brightness which is in His presence, passed clouds and cataracts'<sup>2</sup>—that is to say, over the natural understanding, the light whereof, as Isaias says in Chapter V: *Obtenebrata est in caligine ejus*.<sup>3</sup>

12. Oh, miserable is the fortune of our life, which is lived in such great peril and wherein it is so difficult to find the truth! For that which is most clear and true is to us most dark and doubtful; wherefore, though it is the thing that is most needful for us, we flee from it. And that which gives the greatest light and satisfaction to our eyes we embrace and pursue, though it be the worst thing for us, and make us fall at every step. In what peril and fear does man live, since the very natural light of his eyes by which he has to guide himself<sup>4</sup> is the first light that dazzles him and leads him astray on his road to God! And if he is to know with certainty by what road he travels, he must perforce keep his eyes closed and walk in darkness, that he may be secure from the enemies who inhabit his own house—that is, his senses and faculties.

13. Well hidden, then, and well protected is the soul in these dark waters, when it is close to God. For, as these waters serve as a tabernacle and dwelling-place for God Himself, they will serve the soul in the same way and for a perfect protection and security, though it remain in darkness, wherein, as we have said, it is hidden<sup>5</sup> and protected from itself, and from all evils<sup>6</sup> that come from creatures; for to such the words of David refer in another Psalm, where he says: 'Thou shalt hide them in the hiding-place of Thy face from the disturbance of

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xvii, 12 [A.V., xviii, 11]. A alone gives the passage both in Latin and in Spanish.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xvii, 13 [A.V., xviii, 12].

<sup>3</sup> Isaias v, 30.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'though in darkness, where it is hidden.'

<sup>6</sup> A, V, e.p.: 'and from all the other evils.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'wherewith he guides himself.'

men; Thou shalt protect them in Thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues.<sup>1</sup> Herein we understand all kinds of protection; for to be hidden in the face of God from the disturbance of men is to be fortified with this dark contemplation against all the chances which may come upon the soul from men. And to be protected in His tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues is for the soul to be engulfed in these dark waters, which are the tabernacle of David whereof we have spoken. Wherefore, since the soul has all its desires and affections weaned and its faculties set in darkness, it is free from all imperfections which contradict the spirit, whether they come from its own flesh or from other creatures. Wherefore this soul may well say that it journeys 'in darkness and secure.'

14. There is likewise another reason, which is no less effectual than the last, by which we may understand how the soul journeys securely in darkness;<sup>2</sup> it is derived from the fortitude by which the soul is at once inspired in these obscure and afflictive dark waters of God. For after all, though the waters be dark, they are none the less waters, and therefore they cannot but refresh and fortify the soul in that which is most needful for it, although in darkness and with affliction. For the soul immediately perceives in itself a genuine determination and an effectual desire to do naught which it understands to be an offence to God, and to omit to do naught that seems to be for His service. For that dark love cleaves to the soul, causing it a most watchful care and an inward solicitude concerning that which it must do, or must not do, for His sake, in order to please Him. It will consider and ask itself a thousand times if it has given Him cause to be offended; and all this it will do with much greater care and solicitude than before, as has already been said with respect to the yearnings of love. For here all the desires and energies and faculties of the soul are recollected from all things else, and its effort and strength are employed in pleasing its God alone.<sup>3</sup> After this manner the soul goes forth from itself and from all created things to the sweet and delectable union of love of God, 'In darkness and secure.'

### **By the secret ladder, disguised.**

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xxx, 21 [A.V., xxxi, 20].

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'journeys well, though in darkness.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: '... of the soul, since they are recollected from all things else, employ their effort and strength in pleasing their God alone.'

## CHAPTER XVII

*Explains how this dark contemplation is secret.*<sup>1</sup>

THREE things have to be expounded with reference to three words contained in this present line. Two (namely, 'secret' and 'ladder') belong to the dark night of contemplation of which we are treating; the third (namely, 'disguised') belongs to the soul by reason of the manner wherein it conducts itself in this night.<sup>2</sup> As to the first, it must be known that in this line the soul describes this dark contemplation, by which it goes forth to the union of love, as a secret ladder, because of the two properties which belong to it—namely, its being secret and its being a ladder. We shall treat of each separately.<sup>3</sup>

2. First, it describes this dark contemplation as 'secret,' since, as we have indicated above, it is mystical theology, which theologians call secret wisdom,<sup>4</sup> and which, as Saint Thomas says, is communicated and infused into the soul through love.<sup>5</sup> This happens<sup>6</sup> secretly and in darkness, so as to be hidden from the work<sup>7</sup> of the understanding and of other faculties. Wherefore, inasmuch as the faculties aforementioned attain not to it, but the Holy Spirit infuses and orders it in the soul,<sup>8</sup> as says the Bride in the Songs, without either its knowledge or its understanding, it is called secret. And, in truth, not only does the soul not understand it, but there is none that does so, not even the devil; inasmuch as the Master Who teaches the soul is within it in its substance, to which the devil may not attain, neither may natural sense nor understanding.<sup>9</sup>

3. And it is not for this reason alone that it may be called secret, but likewise because of the effects which it produces in the soul. For it is secret not only in the darknesses and afflictions of purgation, when this wisdom of love<sup>10</sup> purges the soul, and the soul is unable to speak of

<sup>1</sup> So e.p. The Codices make no division.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'but the third, which is "disguised," touches the manner wherein the soul conducts itself in this night.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'which belong to it, and which we shall proceed to expound.'

<sup>4</sup> H: 'mystical wisdom.'

<sup>5</sup> 'Propter hoc Gregorius (Hom. 14 in Ezech.) constituit vitam contemplativam in charitate Dei.' Cf. *Summa Theologica*, 2a, 2æ, q. 45, a. 2.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'through love more especially. And this happens.'

<sup>7</sup> A, e.p.: 'from the natural work.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'and orders.' A, B, M read: 'infuses and adorns it.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p. omits: 'to which . . . understanding.'

<sup>10</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'this secret wisdom.'

it, but equally so afterwards in illumination, when this wisdom is communicated to it most clearly. Even then it is still so secret that the soul cannot speak of it<sup>1</sup> and give it a name whereby it may be called; for, apart from the fact that the soul has no desire to speak of it, it can find no suitable way or manner or similitude by which it may be able to describe such lofty understanding and such delicate<sup>2</sup> spiritual feeling. And thus, even though the soul might have a great desire to express it and might find many ways in which to describe it, it would still be secret and remain undescribed.<sup>3</sup> For, as that inward wisdom is so simple, so general and so spiritual that it has not entered into the understanding enwrapped or cloaked in any form or image subject to sense,<sup>4</sup> it follows that sense and imagination (as it has not entered through them nor has taken their form and colour) cannot account for it or imagine it, so as to say anything concerning it,<sup>5</sup> although the soul be clearly aware that it is experiencing and partaking of that rare and delectable wisdom. It is like one who sees something never seen before, whereof he has not even seen the like; although he might understand its nature and have experience of it, he would be unable to give it a name, or say what it is, however much he tried to do so, and this in spite of its being a thing which he had perceived with the senses. How much less, then, could he describe a thing that has not entered through the senses! For the language of God has this characteristic that, since it is very intimate and spiritual<sup>6</sup> in its relations with the soul, it transcends every sense and at once makes all harmony and capacity of the outward and inward senses to cease and be dumb.

4. For this we have both authorities and examples in the Divine Scripture. For the incapacity of man to speak of it and describe it in words was shown by Jeremias,<sup>7</sup> when, after God had spoken with him, he knew not what to say, save 'Ah, ah, ah!' This interior incapacity—that is, of the interior sense of the imagination—and also that of the exterior sense corresponding to it was also demonstrated in the case of Moses, when he stood before God in the bush;<sup>8</sup> not only did he say to God that after speaking with Him he knew not neither was able to speak, but also that not even (as is said in the Acts of the Apostles)<sup>9</sup> with the interior imagination did he dare to meditate, for it

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'cannot discern it.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'delicate and infused.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'it would ever remain secret.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds: 'as sometimes happens.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'or imagine it, in such a manner as to be able to say anything well concerning it.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'that, when it is very intimate, infused and spiritual.'

<sup>7</sup> Jeremias i, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Exodus iv, 10 [cf. iii, 2].

<sup>9</sup> Acts vii, 32.

seemed to him that his imagination was very far away and was too dumb, not only to express any part of that which he understood concerning God, but even to have the capacity to receive aught therefrom. Wherefore, inasmuch as the wisdom of this contemplation is the language of God to the soul, addressed by pure spirit to pure spirit, naught that is less than spirit, such as the senses, can perceive it, and thus to them it is secret, and they know it not, neither can they say it,<sup>1</sup> nor do they desire to do so, because they see it not.<sup>2</sup>

5. We may deduce from this the reason why certain persons—good and fearful souls—who walk along this road and would like to give an account of their spiritual state to their director,<sup>3</sup> are neither able to do so nor know how. For the reason we have described,<sup>4</sup> they have a great repugnance in speaking of it,<sup>5</sup> especially when their contemplation is of the purer sort, so that the soul itself is hardly conscious of it. Such a person is only able to say that he is satisfied, tranquil and contented and that he is conscious of the presence of God, and that, as it seems to him, all is going well with him; but he cannot describe the state of his soul, nor can he say anything about it save in general terms like these. It is a different matter when the experiences of the soul are of a particular kind, such as visions, feelings, etc., which, being ordinarily received under some species wherein sense participates, can be described under that species, or by some other similitude. But this capacity for being described is not in the nature of pure contemplation, which is indescribable, as we have said,<sup>6</sup> for the which reason it is called secret.

6. And not only for that reason is it called secret, and is so, but likewise because this mystical knowledge has the property of hiding the soul within itself. For, besides performing its ordinary function, it sometimes absorbs the soul and engulfs it in its secret abyss, in such a way that the soul clearly sees that it has been carried far away from every creature and has become most remote therefrom;<sup>7</sup> so that it considers itself as having been placed in a most profound and vast retreat, to which no human creature can attain, such as an immense

<sup>1</sup> [Or: 'and they know not how to say it nor are able to do so.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'was very far away and dumb. And as the wisdom of this contemplation is the language of God to the soul, of [or 'from'] pure spirit, the senses, which are not this [i.e., 'pure spirit'], perceive it not, and thus it is secret to them, and they know it not, neither can they say it.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to him that rules them.']

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'And thus.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B: 'Hence arises the great repugnance that they have in speaking of it.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'which can hardly be described.'

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'that it is set most far away and most remote from every creature.'] E.p. has 'most completely abandoned' for 'most far away.'

desert, which nowhere has any boundary, a desert the more delectable, pleasant and lovely for its secrecy, vastness and solitude, wherein, the more the soul is raised up above all temporal creatures, the more deeply does it find itself hidden. And so greatly does this abyss of wisdom raise up and exalt the soul at this time, making it to penetrate the veins of the science of love, that it not only shows it how base are all properties of the creatures by comparison with this supreme knowledge and Divine feeling, but likewise it learns how base and defective, and, in some measure, how inapt, are all the terms and words which are used in this life to treat of Divine things, and how impossible it is,<sup>1</sup> in any natural way or manner, however learnedly and sublimely they may be spoken of, to be able to know and perceive them as they are, save by the illumination of this mystical theology. And thus, when by means of this illumination the soul discerns this truth, namely, that it cannot reach it, still less explain it, by common or human language, it rightly calls it secret.

7. This property of secrecy and superiority over natural capacity, which belongs to this Divine contemplation, belongs to it, not only because it is supernatural, but also inasmuch as it is a road that guides and leads the soul<sup>2</sup> to the perfections of union with God; which, as they are things unknown after a human manner, must be approached, after a human manner,<sup>3</sup> by unknowing and by Divine ignorance. For, speaking mystically, as we are speaking here, Divine things and perfections<sup>4</sup> are known and understood as they are, not when they are being sought after and practised,<sup>5</sup> but when they have been found and practised. To this purpose speaks the prophet Baruch concerning this Divine wisdom: 'There is none that can know her ways nor that can imagine her paths.'<sup>6</sup> Likewise the royal Prophet speaks in this manner concerning this road of the soul, when he says to God: 'Thy lightnings lighted and illumined the round earth; the earth was moved and trembled.'<sup>7</sup> Thy way<sup>8</sup> is in the sea and Thy paths are in many waters; and Thy footsteps shall not be known.'<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'and how it is not possible.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'inasmuch as it is a guide that guides the soul.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'after a human manner.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. has 'these things' and omits 'and perfections.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and practised.'

<sup>6</sup> Baruch iii, 31.

<sup>7</sup> P omits this passage and G omits an entire page here. Other MSS. have various words for that which is here rendered 'trembled' [but English has only the one word which fairly expresses them all].

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'Thy road.'

<sup>9</sup> Psalm lxxvi, 19-20 [A.V., lxxvii, 18-19].

8. All this, speaking spiritually, is to be understood in the sense wherein we are speaking. For the illumination of the round earth<sup>1</sup> by the lightnings<sup>2</sup> of God is the enlightenment which is produced by this Divine contemplation in the faculties of the soul; the moving and trembling of the earth is the painful purgation which is caused therein; and to say that the way and the road of God whereby the soul journeys to Him is in the sea, and His footprints are in many waters and for this reason shall not be known, is as much as to say that this road whereby the soul journeys to God is as secret and as hidden from the sense of the soul as the way of one that walks on the sea, whose paths and footprints are not known, is hidden from the sense of the body. The steps and footprints which God is imprinting upon the souls that He desires to bring near to Himself, and to make great in union with His Wisdom, have also this property, that they are not known. Wherefore in the Book of Job mention is made of this matter, in these words: 'Hast thou perchance known the paths of the great clouds or the perfect knowledges?'<sup>3</sup> By this are understood the ways and roads whereby God continually exalts souls and perfects them in His Wisdom, which souls are here understood by the clouds. It follows, then, that this contemplation which is guiding the soul to God is secret wisdom.

## CHAPTER XVIII

*Explains how this secret wisdom is likewise a ladder.<sup>4</sup>*

IT now remains<sup>5</sup> to consider the second point—namely, how this secret wisdom is likewise a ladder. With respect to this it must be known that we can call this secret contemplation a ladder for many reasons. In the first place, because, just as men mount by means of ladders and climb up to possessions and treasures and things that are in strong places, even so also, by means of this secret contemplation, without knowing how, the soul ascends and climbs up to a knowledge and possession of<sup>6</sup> the good things and treasures of Heaven. This is well expressed by the royal prophet David, when he says: 'Blessed is he that hath Thy favour and help, for such a man hath placed in his

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'of the roundness of the earth.']

<sup>2</sup> [*coruscaciones.*] A, P, e.p.: *ilustraciones* [the word translated 'lightnings' at the end of § 7; the singular is rendered 'enlightenment' in this present clause].

<sup>3</sup> Job xxxvii, 16.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'It remains.'

<sup>4</sup> So e.p. There is no division in the Codices.

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'rises to scale, know and possess.']

heart ascensions into the vale of tears in the place which he hath appointed;<sup>1</sup> for after this manner the Lord of the law shall give blessing, and they shall go from virtue to virtue as from step to step, and the God of gods shall be seen in Sion.<sup>2</sup> This God is the treasure of the strong place of Sion, which is happiness.

2. We may also call it a ladder because, even as the ladder has those same steps in order that men may mount, it has them also that they may descend; even so is it likewise with this secret contemplation, for those same communications which it causes in the soul raise it up to God, yet humble it with respect to itself. For communications which are indeed of God have this property, that they humble the soul and at the same time exalt it. For, upon this road, to go down is to go up, and to go up, to go down, for he that humbles himself is exalted and he that exalts himself is humbled.<sup>3</sup> And besides the fact that the virtue of humility is greatness, for the exercise of the soul therein, God is wont to make it mount by this ladder so that it may descend, and to make it descend so that it may mount, that the words of the Wise Man may thus be fulfilled, namely: 'Before the soul is exalted, it is humbled; and before it is humbled, it is exalted.'<sup>4</sup>

3. Speaking now in a natural way,<sup>5</sup> the soul that desires to consider it will be able to see how on this road (we leave apart the spiritual aspect, of which the soul is not conscious) it has to suffer many ups and downs, and how the prosperity which it enjoys is followed immediately by certain storms and trials; so much so, that it appears to have been given that period of calm in order that it might be forewarned and strengthened against the poverty which has followed;<sup>6</sup> just as after misery and torment there come abundance and calm. It seems to the soul as if, before celebrating that festival, it has first been made to keep that vigil. This is the ordinary course and proceeding of the state of contemplation until the soul arrives at the state of quietness; it never remains in the same state for long together, but is ascending and descending continually.

4. The reason for this is that, as the state of perfection, which consists in the perfect love of God and contempt for self, cannot exist

<sup>1</sup> A: 'for such a man hath placed in his heart of sighs'; B: 'for such a man hath placed in his heart his sighs.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxxxiii, 6 [A.V., lxxxiv, 7].

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke xiv, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs xviii, 12.

<sup>5</sup> So H. A, B, M read [*hablando ahora manualmente*, which in its context I take to mean]: 'Speaking now in a homely way'; Bz., Mtr., V: 'in a somewhat homely way.'

E.p. has: 'Likewise, according to this quality of a ladder, the soul,' etc.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'against its present hardships.'

unless it have these two parts, which are the knowledge of God and of oneself, the soul has of necessity to be practised first in the one and then in the other, now being given to taste of the one—that is, exaltation—and now being made to experience the other—that is, humiliation—until it has acquired perfect habits; and then this ascending and descending will cease, since the soul will have attained to God and become united with Him, which comes to pass at the summit of this ladder, for the ladder rests and leans upon Him. For this ladder of contemplation, which, as we have said, comes down from God, is pre-figured by that ladder which Jacob saw as he slept, whereon angels were ascending and descending, from God to man, and from man to God, Who Himself was leaning upon the end of the ladder.<sup>1</sup> All this, says Divine Scripture, took place by night, when Jacob slept, in order to express how secret is this road and ascent to God, and how different from that of man's knowledge. This is very evident, since ordinarily that which is of the greatest profit in it—namely, to be ever losing oneself and becoming as nothing<sup>2</sup>—is considered the worst thing possible; and that which is of least worth, which is for a soul to find consolation and sweetness (wherein it ordinarily loses rather than gains), is considered best.

5. But, speaking now somewhat more substantially and properly of this ladder of secret contemplation, we shall observe that the principal characteristic of contemplation, on account of which it is here called a ladder, is that it is the science of love. This, as we have said,<sup>3</sup> is an infused and loving knowledge of God, which enlightens the soul and at the same time enkindles it with love, until it is raised up step by step, even unto God its Creator. For it is love alone that unites and joins the soul with God. To the end that this may be seen more clearly, we shall here indicate the steps of this Divine ladder one by one, pointing out briefly the marks and effects of each, so that the soul may conjecture hereby on which of them it is standing. We shall therefore distinguish them by their effects, as do Saint Bernard and Saint Thomas,<sup>4</sup> for to know them in themselves is not possible after a natural manner, inasmuch as this ladder of love is, as we have said, so secret that God alone is He that measures and weighs it.

<sup>1</sup> Genesis xxviii, 12.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and annihilating oneself.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'as we have said.'

<sup>4</sup> 'Ut dicit Bernardus, Magna res est amor, sed sunt in eo gradus. Loquendo ergo aliquantulum magis moraliter quam realiter, decem amoris gradus distinguere possumus' (D. Thom., *De dilectione Dei et proximi*, cap. xxvii. Cf. Opusc. LXI of the edition of Venice, 1595).

## CHAPTER XIX

*Begins to explain the ten steps<sup>1</sup> of the mystic ladder of Divine love, according to Saint Bernard and Saint Thomas. The first five are here treated.<sup>2</sup>*

WE observe, then, that the steps of this ladder of love by which the soul mounts, one by one, to God, are ten. The first step of love causes the soul to languish, and this to its advantage. The Bride is speaking from this step of love when she says: 'I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, that, if ye find my Beloved, ye tell Him that I am sick with love.'<sup>3</sup> This sickness, however, is not unto death, but for the glory of God, for in this sickness the soul<sup>4</sup> swoons as to sin and as to all things that are not God, for the sake of God Himself, even as David testifies, saying: 'My soul hath swooned away'<sup>5</sup>—that is, with respect to all things, for Thy salvation. For just as a sick man first of all loses his appetite and taste for all food, and his colour changes, so likewise in this degree of love the soul loses its taste and desire for all things and changes its colour and the other accidentals of its past life,<sup>6</sup> like one in love. The soul falls not into this sickness if excess of heat be not communicated to it from above,<sup>7</sup> even as is expressed in that verse of David which says: *Pluviam voluntariam segregabis, Deus, hereditati tuæ, et infirmata est*,<sup>8</sup> etc. This sickness and swooning to all things, which is the beginning and the first step on the road to God, we clearly described above, when we were speaking of the annihilation wherein the soul finds itself when it begins to climb<sup>9</sup> this ladder of contemplative purgation,<sup>10</sup> when it can find no pleasure, support, consolation or abiding-place in anything soever. Wherefore from this step it begins at once to climb to the second.<sup>11</sup>

2. The second step causes the soul to seek God without ceasing.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [The word translated 'step' may also (and often more elegantly) be rendered 'degree.' The same word is kept, however, throughout the translation of this chapter except where noted below.]

<sup>2</sup> So e.p. The Codices make no division.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'for herein the soul.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'and the . . . life.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'which is here the mystic fever.'

<sup>8</sup> Psalm lxvii, 10 [A.V., lxviii, 9]. The Latin text is found in all the Codices except C, G, P.

<sup>9</sup> [Lit., 'to enter (upon).']

<sup>11</sup> E.p.: 'to climb to the rest.'

<sup>12</sup> The word 'God' is found only in A, B, e.p.

<sup>3</sup> Canticles v, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm cxlii, 7 [A.V., cxliii, 7].

<sup>10</sup> V: 'of purgative contemplation.'

Wherefore, when the Bride says that she sought Him by night upon her bed (when she had swooned away according to the first step of love) and found Him not, she said: 'I will arise and will seek Him Whom my soul loveth.'<sup>1</sup> This, as we say, the soul does without ceasing, as David counsels it, saying: 'Seek ye ever the face of God, and seek ye Him in all things, tarrying not until ye find Him;'<sup>2</sup> like the Bride, who, having enquired for Him of the watchmen, passed on at once and left them. Mary Magdalene did not even notice the angels at the sepulchre.<sup>3</sup> On this step the soul now walks so anxiously that it seeks the Beloved in all things. In whatsoever it thinks, it thinks at once of the Beloved. Of whatsoever it speaks, in whatsoever matters present themselves, it is speaking and communing at once with the Beloved. When it eats, when it sleeps, when it watches, when it does aught soever, all its care is about the Beloved, as is said above with respect to the yearnings of love. And now, as love begins to recover its health and find new strength in the love of this second step,<sup>4</sup> it begins at once to mount to the third, by means of a certain degree<sup>5</sup> of new purgation in the night, as we shall afterwards describe, which produces in the soul the following effects.

3. The third step of the ladder of love is that which causes the soul to work and gives it fervour so that it fails not. Concerning this the royal Prophet says: 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, for in His commandments he is eager to labour greatly.'<sup>6</sup> Wherefore if fear, being the son of love, causes within him this eagerness to labour,<sup>7</sup> what will be done by love itself? On this step the soul considers great works undertaken for the Beloved as small; many things as few; and the long time for which it serves Him as short, by reason of the fire of love wherein it is now burning. Even so to Jacob, though after seven years he had been made to serve seven more, they seemed few because of the greatness of his love.<sup>8</sup> Now if the love of a mere creature could accomplish so much in Jacob, what will love of the Creator be able to do when on this third step it takes possession of the soul? Here, for the great love which the soul bears to God, it suffers great pains and afflictions because of the little that it does for God; and if it were

<sup>1</sup> Canticles iii, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm civ, 4 [A.V., cv, 4].

<sup>3</sup> St. John xx. [This is the reading of all MSS. and editions. The reference is presumably to v. 14. But cf. vv. 11-13.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: '... its health, gathering strength on this second step.'

<sup>5</sup> [The word in the Spanish is that elsewhere translated 'step.']

<sup>6</sup> Psalm cxi, 1 [A.V., cxii, 1].

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'makes in him this labour of eagerness.'] E.p.: 'causes this effect of eagerness.'

<sup>8</sup> Genesis xxix, 20.

lawful for it to be destroyed a thousand times for Him it would be comforted. Wherefore it considers itself useless in all that it does and thinks itself to be living in vain. Another wondrous effect produced here in the soul is that it considers itself as being, most certainly, worse than all other souls: first, because love is continually teaching it how much is due to God;<sup>1</sup> and second, because, as the works which it here does for God are many and it knows them all to be faulty and imperfect, they all bring it confusion and affliction, for it realizes in how lowly a manner it is working for God, Who is so high. On this third step, the soul is very far from vainglory or presumption, and from condemning others. These anxious effects, with many others like them, are produced in the soul by this third step;<sup>2</sup> wherefore it<sup>3</sup> gains courage and strength from them in order to mount to the fourth step, which is that that follows.

4. The fourth step of this ladder of love is that whereby there is caused in the soul an habitual suffering because of the Beloved, yet without weariness. For, as Saint Augustine says, love makes all things that are great, grievous and burdensome to be almost naught.<sup>4</sup> From this step the Bride was speaking when, desiring to attain to the last step, she said to the Spouse: 'Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love—that is, the act and work of love—is strong as death, and emulation and importunity last as long as hell.'<sup>5</sup> The spirit here has so much strength that it has subjected the flesh and takes as little account of it as does the tree of one of its leaves. In no way does the soul here seek its own consolation or pleasure, either in God, or in aught else, nor does it desire or seek to pray to God for favours, for it sees clearly that it has already received enough of these, and all its anxiety is set upon the manner<sup>6</sup> wherein it will be able to do something that is pleasing to God and to render Him some service such as He merits and in return for what it has received from Him, although it be greatly to its cost. The soul says in its heart and spirit: Ah, my God and Lord! How many are there that go to seek in Thee their own consolation and pleasure, and desire Thee to grant them favours and gifts; but those who long to do Thee pleasure and to give Thee something

<sup>1</sup> [Lit., 'how much God merits.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'of love.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'wherefore the soul.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds: 'and very light.' Cf. St. Augustine: *Serm. IX de Verbis Domini in Evang. secundum Math., in fine*: 'Omnia enim sæva et immania prorsus facilia et prope nulla efficit amor.'

<sup>5</sup> Canticles viii, 5.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'or in aught else, nor from that motive of consolation or self-interest does it beg favours of God. For all its anxiety is now about the manner.'

at their cost, setting their own interests last, are very few. The failure, my God, is not in Thy unwillingness to grant us new favours, but in our neglect to use those that we have received in Thy service alone,<sup>1</sup> in order to constrain Thee to grant them to us continually. Exceeding lofty is this step of love; for, as the soul goes ever after God with love so true, imbued with the spirit of suffering for His sake, His Majesty oftentimes and quite habitually grants it joy, and visits it sweetly and delectably in the spirit; for the boundless love of Christ, the Word, cannot suffer the afflictions of His lover without succouring him. This He affirmed through Jeremias, saying: 'I have remembered thee, pitying thy youth and tenderness, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness.'<sup>2</sup> Speaking spiritually, this denotes the detachment which the soul now has interiorly from every creature, so that it rests not and nowhere finds quietness. This fourth step enkindles the soul and makes it to burn in such desire for God that it causes it to mount to the fifth, which is that which follows.

5. The fifth step of this ladder of love makes the soul to desire and long for God impatiently. On this step the vehemence of the lover to comprehend the Beloved and be united with Him is such that every delay, however brief, becomes very long, wearisome and oppressive to it, and it continually believes itself to be finding the Beloved. And when it sees its desire frustrated (which is at almost every moment), it swoons away with its yearning, as says the Psalmist, speaking from this step, in these words: 'My soul longs and faints for the dwellings of the Lord.'<sup>3</sup> On this step the lover must needs see that which he loves, or die; at this step was Rachel,<sup>4</sup> when, for the great longing that she had for children, she said to Jacob, her spouse: 'Give me children, else shall I die.'<sup>5</sup> Here men suffer hunger like dogs and go about and surround the city of God. On this step, which is one of hunger,<sup>6</sup> the soul is nourished upon love; for, even as is its hunger, so is its abundance; so that it rises hence to the sixth step, producing the effects which follow.

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'For Thou, my God, failest not in willingness to grant us favours; it is we who fail to use those that we have received in Thy service alone.'

<sup>2</sup> Jeremias ii, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxxxiii, 2 [A.V., lxxxiv, 2].

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'must needs attain that which he loves, or die, even as Rachel,' etc.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis xxx, 1.

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'On this hungering step.'] E.p. omits the whole of the preceding sentence and then abbreviates: 'Here the soul is nourished,' etc.

## CHAPTER XX

*Wherein are treated the other five steps of love.*<sup>1</sup>

ON the sixth step the soul runs swiftly to God and touches Him again and again; and it runs without fainting<sup>2</sup> by reason of its hope. For here the love that has made it strong makes it to fly swiftly. Of this step the prophet Isaias speaks thus: 'The saints that hope in God shall renew their strength; they shall take wings as the eagle; they shall fly and shall not faint,'<sup>3</sup> as they did at the fifth step. To this step likewise alludes that verse of the Psalm: 'As the hart desires the waters, my soul desires Thee, O God.'<sup>4</sup> For the hart, in its thirst, runs to the waters with great swiftness. The cause of this swiftness in love which the soul has on this step is that its charity is greatly enlarged<sup>5</sup> within it, since the soul is here almost wholly purified, as is said likewise in the Psalm, namely: *Sine iniquitate cucurri*.<sup>6</sup> And in another Psalm: 'I ran the way of Thy commandments when Thou didst enlarge my heart';<sup>7</sup> and thus from this sixth step the soul at once mounts to the seventh, which is that which follows.

2. The seventh step of this ladder makes the soul to become vehement in its boldness. Here love employs not its judgment in order to hope,<sup>8</sup> nor does it take counsel so that it may draw back, neither can any shame restrain it; for the favour which God here grants to the soul causes it to become vehement in its boldness. Hence follows that which the Apostle says, namely: That charity believeth all things, hopeth all things and is capable of all things.<sup>9</sup> Of this step spake Moses, when he entreated God to pardon the people, and if not, to blot out his name from the book of life wherein He had written it.<sup>10</sup> Men like these obtain from God that which they beg of Him with desire. Wherefore David says: 'Delight thou in God and He will give thee the petitions of thy heart.'<sup>11</sup> On this step the Bride grew bold, and said:

<sup>1</sup> So e.p. The Codices make no division.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... runs swiftly to God. And thus it runs without fainting.'

<sup>3</sup> Isaias xl, 31. So e.p. The Codices mistakenly attribute this passage to David.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xli, 2 [A.V., xlii, 1].

<sup>5</sup> V: 'is very delicate' [probably an error: *delicada* for *dilatada*].

<sup>6</sup> Psalm lviii, 5 [A.V., lix, 4].

<sup>7</sup> Psalm cxviii, 32 [A.V., cxix, 32].

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: '... in its boldness, and it is carried away thereby with love and intensity, so that it allows not itself to be led away by its judgment in order to hope.'

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 7. The sentence 'Hence ... of all things' is omitted from e.p.

<sup>10</sup> Exodus xxxii, 31-2.

<sup>11</sup> Psalm xxxvi, 4 [A.V., xxxvii, 4].

*Osculetur me osculo oris sui.*<sup>1</sup> To this step it is not lawful<sup>2</sup> for the soul to aspire boldly, unless it feel the interior favour of the King's sceptre extended to it, lest perchance it fall from the other steps which it has mounted up to this point, and wherein it must ever possess itself in humility. From this daring and power which God grants to the soul on this seventh step, so that it may be bold with God in the vehemence of love, follows the eighth, which is that wherein it takes the Beloved captive and is united with Him, as follows.<sup>3</sup>

3. The eighth step of love causes the soul to seize Him and hold Him fast without letting Him go, even as the Bride says, after this manner: 'I found Him Whom my heart and soul love; I held Him and I will not let Him go.'<sup>4</sup> On this step of union the soul satisfies her desire, but not continuously. Certain souls climb some way,<sup>5</sup> and then lose their hold; for, if this state were to continue, it would be glory itself in this life; and thus the soul remains therein<sup>6</sup> for very short periods of time.<sup>7</sup> To the prophet Daniel, because he was a man of desires, was sent a command from God<sup>8</sup> to remain on this step, when it was said to him: 'Daniel, stay upon thy step, because thou art a man of desires.'<sup>9</sup> After this step follows the ninth, which is that of souls now perfect, as we shall afterwards say, which is that that follows.<sup>10</sup>

4. The ninth step of love makes the soul to burn with sweetness. This step is that of the perfect, who now burn sweetly in God. For this sweet and delectable ardour is caused in them by the Holy Spirit by reason of the union which they have with God. For this cause Saint Gregory says, concerning the Apostles, that when the Holy Spirit came upon them visibly they burned inwardly and sweetly through love.<sup>11</sup> Of the good things and riches of God which the soul enjoys on this step, we cannot speak; for if many books were to be written concerning it the greater part would still remain untold. For this cause, and because we shall say something of it hereafter, I say no more here

<sup>1</sup> Canticles i, 1.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'But it is to be emphasized here that it is not lawful,' etc.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'as follows.'

<sup>4</sup> Canticles iii, 4.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'attain to setting their foot.']

<sup>6</sup> P: 'walks therein.'

<sup>7</sup> So Bz., H, M, V. P reads as in the preceding note. The other Codices have: 'the soul spends very brief periods of time herein.' E.p. modifies the whole passage thus: 'for, if it were not so, and they remained on this step, they would have a certain kind of glory in this life, and thus the soul spends very short periods of time on this step.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'The prophet Daniel . . . was told, on behalf of God,' etc.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel x, 11. E.p. gives the passage in Latin also.

<sup>10</sup> E.p. has only: 'as we shall say.'

<sup>11</sup> 'Dum Deum in ignis visione suscipiunt, per amorem suavitè arserunt' (*Hom. XXX in Evang.*).

than that after this follows the tenth and last step of this ladder of love, which belongs not to this life.

5. The tenth and last step of this secret ladder of love causes the soul to become wholly assimilated to God, by reason of the clear and immediate<sup>1</sup> vision of God which it then possesses; when, having ascended in this life to the ninth step, it goes forth from the flesh. These souls, who are few, enter not into purgatory, since they have already been wholly purged by love.<sup>2</sup> Of these Saint Matthew says: *Beati mundo corde: quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt.*<sup>3</sup> And, as we say, this vision is the cause of the perfect likeness of the soul to God, for, as Saint John says, we know that we shall be like Him.<sup>4</sup> Not because the soul will come to have the capacity of God, for that is impossible; but because all that it is will become like to God,<sup>5</sup> for which cause it will be called, and will be, God by participation.

6. This is the secret ladder whereof the soul here speaks, although upon these higher steps it is no longer very secret to the soul, since much is revealed to it by love, through the great effects which love produces in it. But, on this last step of clear vision, which is the last step of the ladder whereon God leans, as we have said already, there is naught that is hidden from the soul, by reason of its complete assimilation. Wherefore Our Saviour says: 'In that day yeshall ask Me nothing,' etc.<sup>6</sup> But, until that day, however high a point the soul may reach, there remains something hidden from it—namely, all that it lacks for total assimilation in the Divine Essence. After this manner, by this mystical theology and secret love, the soul continues to rise above all things and above itself, and to mount upward to God. For love is like fire,<sup>7</sup> which ever rises upward with the desire to be absorbed in the centre of its sphere.

<sup>1</sup> [i.e., direct, not mediate.] This adjective is omitted in e.p.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'And these souls, who are few, love is wont to leave completely purged in this life, working that which in the next life is wrought in others by purgatory.'

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew v, 8.

<sup>4</sup> 1 St. John iii, 2.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. modifies: 'We know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Wherefore all that [the soul] is will be like to God.'

<sup>6</sup> St. John xvi, 23.

<sup>7</sup> So e.p. The other authorities [and P. Silverio] read: 'is assimilated to fire.'

## CHAPTER XXI

*Which explains the word 'disguised,' and describes the colours of the disguise of the soul in this night.*<sup>1</sup>

NOW that we have explained the reasons why the soul called this contemplation a 'secret ladder,' it remains for us to explain likewise the word 'disguised,' and the reason why the soul says also that it went forth by this 'secret ladder' in 'disguise.'

2. For the understanding of this it must be known<sup>2</sup> that to disguise oneself is naught else but to hide and cover oneself beneath another garb and figure than one's own—sometimes in order to show forth,<sup>3</sup> under that garb or figure, the will and purpose which is in the heart to gain the grace and will of one who is greatly loved; sometimes, again, to hide<sup>4</sup> oneself from one's rivals and thus to accomplish one's object better. At such times a man assumes the garments and livery which best represent and indicate the affection of his heart and which best conceal him from his rivals.

3. The soul, then, touched with the love of Christ the Spouse, and longing to attain to His grace and gain His goodwill, goes forth<sup>5</sup> here disguised with that disguise which most vividly represents the affections of its spirit and which will protect it most securely on its journey from its adversaries and enemies, which are the devil, the world and the flesh. Thus the livery which it wears is of three chief colours—white, green and purple—denoting the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity. By these the soul will not only gain the grace and goodwill of its Beloved, but it will travel in security and complete protection from its three enemies: for faith is an inward tunic of a whiteness so pure that it completely dazzles the eyes of the understanding.<sup>6</sup> And thus, when the soul journeys in its vestment of faith, the devil can neither see it nor succeed in harming it, since it is well protected by faith—more so than by all the other virtues<sup>7</sup>—against the devil, who is at once the strongest and the most cunning of enemies.

<sup>1</sup> So e.p. H lacks the first paragraph of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'it is necessary to know.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits 'forth.' [The Spanish phrase has rather the meaning of 'abroad,' 'to those outside.']

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'or to hide.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'of Christ its Spouse, because it longs . . . goes forth.'

<sup>6</sup> [Lir., 'that it dislocates the sight of all understanding.']

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits: 'more . . . virtues.'

4. It is clear that Saint Peter could find no better protection than faith to save him from the devil, when he said: *Cui resistite fortes in fide*.<sup>1</sup> And in order to gain the grace of the Beloved, and union with Him, the soul cannot put on a better vest and tunic,<sup>2</sup> to serve as a foundation and beginning of the other vestments of the virtues, than this white garment<sup>3</sup> of faith, for without it, as the Apostle says, it is impossible to please God, and with it, it is impossible to fail to please Him.<sup>4</sup> For He Himself says through a prophet: *Sponsabo te mihi in fide*.<sup>5</sup> Which is as much as to say: If thou desirest, O soul, to be united and betrothed to Me, thou must come inwardly clad in faith.

5. This white garment of faith was worn by the soul on its going forth from this dark night, when, walking in interior constraint and darkness, as we have said before, it received no aid, in the form of light, from its understanding, neither from above, since Heaven seemed to be closed to it and God hidden from it, nor from below, since those that taught it satisfied it not. It suffered with constancy and persevered, passing through those trials without fainting or failing the Beloved, Who in trials and tribulations proves the faith of His Bride, so that afterwards she may truly repeat this saying of David, namely: 'By the words of Thy lips I kept hard ways.'<sup>6</sup>

6. Next, over this white tunic of faith the soul now puts on the second colour, which is a green vestment.<sup>7</sup> By this, as we said, is signified<sup>8</sup> the virtue of hope, wherewith, as in the first case, the soul is delivered and protected from the second enemy, which is the world. For this green colour of living hope in God gives the soul such ardour and courage and aspiration to the things of eternal life that, by comparison with what it hopes for therein, all things of the world seem to it to be, as in truth they are, dry and faded and dead and nothing worth. The soul now divests and strips itself of all these worldly vestments and garments, setting its heart upon naught that is in the world and hoping for naught, whether of that which is or of that which is to be, but living clad only in the hope of eternal life. Wherefore, when the heart is thus lifted up above the world, not only can the world neither touch

<sup>1</sup> 1 St. Peter v, 9.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'a better undershirt and tunic.']

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'this whiteness.']

<sup>4</sup> A adds: 'if it be [a] living [faith].' E.p.: 'and with it, if it be [a] living [faith], it pleases Him and seems well to Him.'

<sup>5</sup> Osee ii, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm xvi, 4 [A.V., xvii, 4].

<sup>7</sup> So e.p., substituting this more general word for the *almilla* [a kind of under-waist-coat] of the Codices.

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'By the which colour is signified.'

the heart<sup>1</sup> nor lay hold on it, but it cannot even come within sight of it.

7. And thus, in this green livery and disguise, the soul journeys in complete security from this second enemy, which is the world. For Saint Paul speaks of hope as the helmet of salvation<sup>2</sup>—that is, a piece of armour that protects the whole head, and covers it so that there remains uncovered only a visor through which it may look. And hope has this property, that it covers all the senses of the head of the soul, so that there is naught soever pertaining to the world in which they can be immersed, nor is there an opening through which any arrow of the world<sup>3</sup> can wound them. It has a visor, however, which the soul is permitted to use so that its eyes may look upward, but nowhere else; for this is the function which hope habitually performs in the soul, namely, the directing of its eyes upwards to look at God alone, even as David declared that his eyes were directed, when he said:<sup>4</sup> *Oculi mei semper ad Dominum*.<sup>5</sup> He hoped for no good thing elsewhere, save as he himself says in another Psalm: 'Even as the eyes of the handmaid are set upon the hands of her mistress, even so are our eyes set upon our Lord God, until He have mercy upon us as we hope in Him.'<sup>6</sup>

8. For this reason,<sup>7</sup> because of this green livery (since the soul is ever looking to God and sets its eyes on naught else, neither is pleased with aught save with Him alone), the Beloved has such great pleasure with the soul that it is true to say that the soul obtains from Him as much as it hopes for from Him. Wherefore the Spouse<sup>8</sup> in the Songs tells the Bride that, by looking upon Him with one eye alone, she has wounded His heart.<sup>9</sup> Without this green livery of hope in God alone it would be impossible for the soul to go forth to encompass this loving achievement, for it would have no success, since that which moves and conquers is the importunity of hope.

9. With this livery of hope the soul journeys in disguise through this secret and dark night whereof we have spoken;<sup>10</sup> for it is so completely voided of every possession and support that it fixes its eyes and its care upon naught but God, putting its mouth in the dust,<sup>11</sup> if so be there may be hope—to repeat the quotation made above from Jeremias.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'touch it.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'any arrow thereof.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xxiv, 15 [A.V., xxv, 15].

<sup>4</sup> Psalm cxxii, 2 [A.V., cxxiii, 2].

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'Wherefore He.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'whereof we have spoken.'

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. [For the quotation, see Bk. II, chap. viii, § 1, p. 393, above.]

<sup>8</sup> 1 Thessalonians v, 8.

<sup>9</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'even as David says.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p. omits: 'For this reason.'

<sup>11</sup> Canticles iv, 9.

<sup>12</sup> Lamentations iii, 29.

10. Over the white and the green vestments, as the crown and perfection of this disguise and livery, the soul now puts on the third colour, which is a splendid garment of purple. By this is denoted the third virtue, which is charity. This not only adds grace to the other two colours, but causes the soul to rise to so lofty a point that it is brought near to God, and becomes very beautiful and pleasing to Him, so that it makes bold to say: 'Albeit I am black, O daughters of Jerusalem, I am comely; wherefore the King hath loved me and hath brought me into His chambers.'<sup>1</sup> This livery of charity, which is that of love, and causes greater love in the Beloved,<sup>2</sup> not only protects the soul and hides it from the third enemy, which is the flesh (for where there is true love of God there enters neither love of self nor that of the things of self), but even gives worth to the other virtues, bestowing on them vigour and strength to protect the soul, and grace and beauty to please the Beloved with them, for without charity no virtue has grace before God. This is the purple which is spoken of in the Songs,<sup>3</sup> upon which God reclines.<sup>4</sup> Clad in this purple livery the soul journeys when (as has been explained above in the first stanza) it goes forth from itself in the dark night, and from all things created, 'kindled in love with yearnings,' by this secret ladder of contemplation, to the perfect union of love of God, its beloved salvation.<sup>5</sup>

11. This, then, is the disguise which the soul says that it wears in the night of faith, upon this secret ladder, and these are its three colours. They constitute a most fit preparation for the union of the soul with God, according to its three faculties, which are understanding, memory and will. For faith voids and darkens the understanding as to all its natural intelligence, and herein prepares it for union with Divine Wisdom. Hope voids and withdraws the memory from all creature possessions; for, as Saint Paul says, hope is for that which is not possessed;<sup>6</sup> and thus it withdraws the memory from that which it is capable of possessing,<sup>7</sup> and sets it on that for which it hopes.<sup>8</sup> And for this cause hope in God alone prepares the memory purely for union with God.<sup>9</sup> Charity, in the same way, voids and annihilates the affections and desires of the will for whatever is not God, and sets

<sup>1</sup> Canticles i, 3. [A.V., i, 4.] [For 'chambers' the Spanish has 'bed.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'and . . . Beloved.'

<sup>3</sup> Canticles iii, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Some authorities add: 'whereby He goes up to the reclining-place.'

<sup>5</sup> [Or 'health.']

<sup>6</sup> Romans viii, 24.

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'in this life.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'on that which it hopes to possess.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p. substitutes for 'for union with God' 'according to the void caused in it that it may be united with Him.'

them upon Him alone; and thus this virtue prepares this faculty and unites it with God through love. And thus,<sup>1</sup> since the function of these virtues is the withdrawal of the soul from all that is less than God, their function is consequently that of joining it with God.

12. And thus, unless it journeys earnestly, clad in the garments of these three virtues, it is impossible for the soul to attain to the perfection of union with God through love.<sup>2</sup> Wherefore, in order that the soul might attain that which it desired, which was this loving and delectable union with its Beloved, this disguise and clothing which it assumed was most necessary and convenient. And likewise to have succeeded in thus clothing itself and persevering until it should obtain the end and aspiration which it had so much desired, which was the union of love, was a great and happy chance, wherefore in this line the soul also says:

Oh, happy chance!

## CHAPTER XXII

*Explains the third<sup>3</sup> line of the second stanza.<sup>4</sup>*

IT is very clear that it was a happy chance for this soul to go forth with such an enterprise as this, for it was its going forth that delivered it<sup>5</sup> from the devil and from the world and from its own sensuality, as we have said.<sup>6</sup> Having attained liberty of spirit, so precious<sup>7</sup> and so greatly desired by all, it went forth from low things to high; from terrestrial, it became celestial; from human, Divine. Thus it came to have its conversation in the heavens, as has the soul in this state of perfection, even as we shall go on to say in what follows,<sup>8</sup> although with rather more brevity.

2. For the most important part of my task, and the part which chiefly led me to undertake it, was the explanation of this night to many souls who pass through it and yet know nothing about it, as was said in the prologue. Now this explanation and exposition has already been

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'Wherefore.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'to the perfection of love with God.'

<sup>3</sup> [i.e., in the original Spanish and in our verse rendering of the poem in Vol. II.]

<sup>4</sup> So e.p. The Codices make no division.

<sup>5</sup> E.p. has [for 'for it . . . it'] 'wherein it was delivered.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'as we have said.'

<sup>7</sup> H has 'happy' for 'precious.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'in what follows.'

half completed. Although much less has been said of it than might be said, we have shown how many are the blessings which the soul bears with it through the night and how happy is the chance whereby it passes through it, so that, when a soul is terrified by the horror of so many trials, it is also encouraged by the certain hope of so many and such precious blessings of God as it gains therein. And furthermore, for yet another reason, this was a happy chance for the soul; and this reason is given in the following line:

**In darkness and in concealment.**

### CHAPTER XXIII

*Expounds the fourth line<sup>1</sup> and describes the wondrous hiding-place wherein the soul is set during this night. Shows how, although the devil has an entrance into other places that are very high, he has none into this.<sup>2</sup>*

**I**N concealment' is as much as to say 'in a hiding-place,' or 'in hiding'; and thus, what the soul here says (namely,<sup>3</sup> that it went forth 'in darkness and in concealment') is a more complete explanation of the great security which it describes itself in the first line of the stanza as possessing, by means of this dark contemplation upon the road of the union of the love of God.

2. When the soul, then, says 'in darkness and in concealment,' it means that, inasmuch as it journeyed in darkness after the manner aforementioned, it went in hiding and in concealment from the devil and from his wiles and stratagems. The reason why, as it journeys in the darkness of this contemplation, the soul is free, and is hidden from the stratagems of the devil, is that the infused contemplation which it here possesses is infused into it passively and secretly, without the knowledge of<sup>4</sup> the senses and faculties, whether interior or exterior, of the sensual part. And hence it follows that, not only does it journey in hiding, and is free from the impediment which these faculties can set in its way because of its natural weakness, but likewise from the devil; who, except through these faculties of the sensual part, cannot reach or know that which is in the soul, nor that which is taking place

<sup>1</sup> [i.e., in the original Spanish and in our verse rendering of the poem in Vol. II.]

<sup>2</sup> So e.p. The Codices make no division.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits 'namely.'

<sup>4</sup> A, B, C, V: 'concealed by the darkness from.'

within it. Wherefore, the more spiritual, the more interior and the more remote from the senses is the communication, the farther does the devil fall short of understanding it.

3. And thus it is of great importance for the security of the soul that its inward communication with God should be of such a kind that its very senses of the lower part will remain in darkness<sup>1</sup> and be without knowledge of it, and attain not to it: first, so that it may be possible for the spiritual communication to be more abundant, and that the weakness of its sensual part may not hinder the liberty of its spirit; secondly because, as we say, the soul journeys more securely since the devil cannot penetrate so far. In this way we may understand that passage where Our Saviour, speaking in a spiritual sense, says: 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.'<sup>2</sup> Which is as though He had said: Let not thy left hand know that which takes place upon thy right hand, which is the higher and spiritual part of the soul; that is, let it be of such a kind that the lower portion of thy soul, which is the sensual part, may not attain to it; let it be a secret between the spirit and God alone.

4. It is quite true that oftentimes, when these very intimate and secret spiritual communications are present and take place in the soul, although the devil cannot get to know of what kind and manner they are, yet the great repose and silence which some of them cause in the senses and the faculties of the sensual part make it clear to him that they are taking place and that the soul is receiving a certain blessing<sup>3</sup> from them. And then, as he sees that he cannot succeed in thwarting them in the depth of the soul, he does what he can to disturb and disquiet the sensual part—that part to which he is able to attain—now by means of afflictions, now by terrors and fears, with intent to disquiet and disturb the higher and spiritual part of the soul by this means, with respect to that blessing which it then receives and enjoys. But often, when the communication of such contemplation makes its naked assault upon the soul and exerts its strength upon it, the devil, with all his diligence, is unable to disturb it; rather the soul receives a new and a greater advantage<sup>4</sup> and a securer peace. For, when it feels the disturbing presence of the enemy, then—wondrous thing!—without knowing how it comes to pass, and without any efforts of its own,<sup>5</sup> it enters farther into its own interior depths, feeling that it is indeed

<sup>1</sup> [The Spanish also admits of the rendering: 'remain shut off from it by darkness.']

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew vi, 3.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'a certain great blessing.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'a new advantage and love.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and without any efforts of its own.'

being set in a sure refuge, where it perceives itself to be most completely withdrawn and hidden from the enemy. And thus its peace and joy, which the devil is attempting to take from it, are increased; and all the fear that assails it remains without; and it becomes clearly and exultingly conscious of its secure enjoyment of that quiet peace and sweetness of the hidden Spouse,<sup>1</sup> which neither the world nor the devil can give it or take from it. In that state, therefore, it realizes the truth of the words of the Bride about this, in the Songs, namely: 'See how threescore strong men surround the bed of Solomon, etc., because of the fears of the night.'<sup>2</sup> It is conscious of this strength and peace, although it is often equally conscious that its flesh and bones are being tormented from without.

5. At other times, when the spiritual communication is not made in any great measure to the spirit, but the senses have a part therein,<sup>3</sup> the devil more easily succeeds in disturbing the spirit and raising a tumult within it, by means of the senses, with these terrors. Great are the torment and the affliction which are then caused in the spirit; at times they exceed all that can be expressed. For, when there is a naked contact of spirit with spirit, the horror is intolerable which the evil spirit causes in the good spirit (I mean, in the soul), when its tumult reaches it. This is expressed likewise by the Bride in the Songs, when she says that it has happened thus to her at a time when she wished to descend to interior recollection in order to have fruition of these blessings. She says: 'I went down into the garden of nuts to see the apples of the valleys, and if the vine had flourished. I knew not; my soul troubled me because of the chariots'—that is, because of the chariots and the noise of Aminadab, which is the devil.<sup>4</sup>

6. At other times it comes to pass that the devil is occasionally able to see certain favours which God is pleased to grant the soul when they are bestowed upon it by the mediation of a good angel; for of those favours which come through a good angel God habitually allows the enemy to have knowledge<sup>5</sup>: partly so that he may do that which he can against them according to the measure of justice, and that thus he may not be able to allege with truth that no opportunity is given him for conquering the soul, as he said concerning Job.<sup>6</sup> This would be the

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'of the Spouse in hiding.'

<sup>2</sup> Canticles iii, 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'is accompanied by [communications to] sense.'

<sup>4</sup> Canticles vi, 10 [A.V., vi, 11-12].

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'At other times this opposition of the devil takes place when God grants favours to the soul by the mediation of a good angel; for these [favours] the devil is occasionally able to see because God habitually allows the enemy to have knowledge of them.'

<sup>6</sup> Job i, 1-11.

case if God allowed not a certain equality between the two warriors—namely, the good angel and the bad—when they strive for the soul, so that the victory of either may be of the greater worth<sup>1</sup> and the soul that is victorious and faithful in temptation may be the more abundantly rewarded.

7. We must observe, therefore, that it is for this reason that, in proportion as God is guiding the soul and communing with it, He gives the devil leave to act with it after this manner. When the soul has genuine visions by the instrumentality of the good angel (for it is by this instrumentality that they habitually come, even though Christ reveal Himself, for He scarcely ever appears<sup>2</sup> in His actual person), God also gives<sup>3</sup> the wicked angel leave to present to the soul false visions of this very type in such a way that the soul which is not cautious may easily be deceived by their outward appearance, as many souls have been. Of this there is a figure in Exodus,<sup>4</sup> where it is said that all the genuine signs that Moses wrought were wrought likewise in appearance by the magicians of Pharaoh. If he brought forth frogs, they brought them forth likewise; if he turned water into blood, they did the same.

8. And not only does the evil one imitate God in this type of bodily vision, but he also imitates and interferes in spiritual communications which come through the instrumentality of an angel, when he succeeds in seeing them, as we say (for, as Job said<sup>5</sup>: *Omne sublime videt*). These, however, as they are without form and figure (for it is the nature of spirit to have no such thing), he cannot imitate and counterfeit like those others which are presented under some species or figure. And thus, in order to attack the soul, in the same way as that wherein it is being visited, his fearful spirit presents a similar vision in order to attack and destroy spiritual things by spiritual. When this comes to pass just as the good angel is about to communicate spiritual contemplation to the soul, it is impossible for the soul to shelter itself in the secrecy

<sup>1</sup> E.p. substitutes for this sentence: 'And thus it is meet that God should allow a certain equality between the two warriors—namely, the good angel and the bad—when they strive for the soul, that the victory may be of the greater worth.'

<sup>2</sup> Such is the unanimous opinion of theologians. Some, with St. Thomas (Pt. III, q. 57, a. 6), suppose that the appearance which converted St. Paul near Damascus was that of Our Lord Jesus Christ in person.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. modifies: '... for this reason that, at certain times, in that order whereby God is leading the soul, He gives leave to the devil to disquiet and tempt it, as happens when it has genuine visions by the instrumentality of a good angel, and God also gives,' etc.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus vii, 11–22; viii, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Job xli, 25. E.p. modifies: '... of an angel, when he succeeds in seeing them; since, as Job said,' etc.

and hiding-place of contemplation with sufficient rapidity not to be observed by the devil; and thus he appears to it and produces a certain horror and perturbation of spirit<sup>1</sup> which at times is most distressing to the soul. Sometimes the soul can speedily free itself from him, so that there is no opportunity for the aforementioned horror of the evil spirit to make an impression on it; and it becomes recollected within itself, being favoured, to this end, by the effectual spiritual grace that the good angel then communicates to it.

9. At other times the devil prevails and encompasses the soul with a perturbation and horror which is a greater affliction to it than any torment in this life could be. For, as this horrible communication passes direct from spirit to spirit, in something like nakedness and clearly distinguished from all that is corporeal, it is grievous beyond what every sense can feel; and this lasts in the spirit for some time, yet not for long, for otherwise the spirit would be driven forth from the flesh by the vehement communication of the other spirit. Afterwards there remains to it the memory thereof, which is sufficient to cause it great affliction.<sup>2</sup>

10. All that we have here described comes to pass in the soul passively, without its doing or undoing anything of itself with respect to it.<sup>3</sup> But in this connection it must be known that, when the good angel permits the devil to gain this advantage of assailing the soul<sup>4</sup> with this spiritual horror, he does it to purify the soul and to prepare it by means of this spiritual vigil for some great spiritual favour and festival which he desires to grant it, for he never mortifies save to give life, nor humbles save to exalt, which comes to pass shortly afterwards. Then, according as was the dark and horrible<sup>5</sup> purgation which the soul suffered, so is the fruition now granted it of a wondrous and delectable spiritual contemplation,<sup>6</sup> sometimes so lofty that there is no language to describe it.<sup>7</sup> But the spirit has been greatly refined by the preceding horror of the evil spirit, in order that it may be able to

<sup>1</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'his fearful spirit presents it [i.e., the vision] as it can, when the good angel is about to communicate to the soul spiritual contemplation, and produces a certain horror and perturbation of spirit.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'At other times God allows this perturbation and horror to last longer, which is a greater affliction to the soul than any torment in this life could be. And afterwards there remains to it the memory thereof, which is sufficient to cause it great affliction.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'All that we have said comes to pass in the soul without its doing or undoing anything of itself with respect to this representation or feeling.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'when God permits the devil thus to afflict the soul.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and horrible.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'wondrous and.'

<sup>7</sup> The remainder of this paragraph is omitted in e.p.

receive this blessing; for these spiritual visions belong to the next life rather than to this, and when one of them is seen this is a preparation for the next.

11. This is to be understood with respect to occasions when God visits the soul by the instrumentality of a good angel, wherein, as has been said, the soul is not so totally<sup>1</sup> in darkness and in concealment that the enemy cannot come within reach of it. But, when God Himself visits it, then the words of this line are indeed fulfilled, and it is in total darkness and in concealment from the enemy that the soul receives these spiritual favours of God. The reason for this is that, as His Majesty dwells<sup>2</sup> substantially in the soul, where neither angel nor devil can attain to an understanding of that which comes to pass, they cannot know the intimate and secret communications which take place there between the soul and God. These communications, since the Lord Himself works them, are wholly Divine and sovereign, for they are all substantial touches<sup>3</sup> of Divine union between the soul and God; in one of which the soul receives a greater blessing than in all the rest, since this is the loftiest degree<sup>4</sup> of prayer in existence.

12. For these are the touches that the Bride entreated of Him in the Songs, saying: *Osculetur me osculo oris sui.*<sup>5</sup> Since this is a thing which takes place in such close intimacy with God, whereto the soul desires with such yearnings to attain, it esteems and longs for a touch of this Divinity more than all the other favours that God grants it. Wherefore, after many such favours have been granted to the Bride in the said Songs, of which she has sung therein, she is not satisfied, but entreats Him for these Divine touches, saying: 'Who shall give Thee to me, my brother, that I might find Thee alone without, sucking the breasts of my mother, so that I might kiss Thee with the mouth of my soul, and that thus no man should despise me or make bold to attack me.'<sup>6</sup> By this she denotes the communication which God Himself alone makes to her, as we are saying,<sup>7</sup> far from all the creatures and without their knowledge,<sup>8</sup> for this is meant by 'alone and without, sucking, etc.'<sup>9</sup>—that is, drying up and draining the breasts of the desires and affections of the sensual part of the soul. This takes place when the soul,

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'the soul is [*Lit.*, goes] not secure, nor is so totally.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'as His Majesty is the supreme Lord and dwells.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'and, as it were, touches.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'step.' Cf. p. 435, n. 1, above.]

<sup>5</sup> Canticles i, 1.

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'as we are saying.'

<sup>7</sup> B, C, M, Mtr., V have: 'and concealed from them by darkness.'

<sup>8</sup> The remainder of this sentence is omitted in e.p.

<sup>9</sup> Canticles viii, 1.

in intimate peace and delight, has fruition of these blessings, with liberty of spirit, and without the sensual part being able to hinder it, or the devil to thwart it by means thereof. And then the devil would not make bold to attack it, for he would not reach it, neither could he attain to an understanding of these Divine touches in the substance of the soul in<sup>1</sup> the loving substance of God.

13. To this blessing none attains save through intimate purgation and detachment and spiritual concealment from all that is creature; it comes to pass in the darkness, as we have already explained at length and as we say with respect to this line. The soul is in concealment and in hiding, in the which hiding-place, as we have now said, it continues to be strengthened<sup>2</sup> in union with God through love, wherefore it sings this in the same phrase, saying: 'In darkness and in concealment.'

14. When it comes to pass that those favours are granted to the soul in concealment (that is, as we have said, in spirit only), the soul is wont, during some of them, and without knowing how this comes to pass, to see itself so far withdrawn and separated<sup>3</sup> according to the higher and spiritual part, from the sensual and lower portion,<sup>4</sup> that it recognizes in itself two parts so distinct from each other that it believes that the one has naught to do with the other, but that the one is very remote and far withdrawn from the other. And in reality, in a certain way, this is so; for the operation is now wholly spiritual,<sup>5</sup> and the soul receives no communication in its sensual part. In this way the soul gradually becomes wholly spiritual; and in this hiding-place of unitive contemplation its spiritual desires and passions are to a great degree removed and purged away. And thus, speaking of its higher part, the soul then says in this last line:

**My house being now at rest.<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'with.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. shortens this sentence thus: 'This is in darkness, in the which hiding-place the soul continues to be strengthened,' etc.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'so far separated.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'according to the higher part, from the lower portion.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B, e.p.: 'the operation which now works is wholly spiritual.'

<sup>6</sup> See p. 10, n. 4, above.

## CHAPTER XXIV

*Completes the explanation of the second stanza.<sup>1</sup>*

THIS is as much as to say: The higher portion of my soul being like the lower part also, at rest with respect to its desires and faculties, I went forth to the Divine union of the love of God.

2. Inasmuch as, by means of that war of the dark night, as has been said, the soul is combated<sup>2</sup> and purged after two manners—namely, according to its sensual and its spiritual part—with its senses, faculties and passions, so likewise after two manners—namely,<sup>3</sup> according to these two parts, the sensual and the spiritual—with all its faculties and desires, the soul attains to an enjoyment of peace and rest. For this reason, as has likewise been said, the soul twice pronounces this line—namely,<sup>4</sup> in this stanza and in the last—because of these two portions of the soul, the spiritual and the sensual, which, in order that they may go forth to the Divine union of love, must needs first be reformed, ordered and tranquillized<sup>5</sup> with respect to the sensual and to the spiritual, according to the nature of the state of innocence which was Adam's.<sup>6</sup> And thus this line which, in the first stanza, was understood of the repose of the lower and sensual portion,<sup>7</sup> is, in this second stanza, understood more particularly of the higher and spiritual part; for which reason it is repeated.<sup>8</sup>

3. This repose and quiet of this spiritual house the soul comes to attain, habitually and perfectly (in so far as the condition of this life allows), by means of the acts of the substantial touches<sup>9</sup> of Divine

<sup>1</sup> From e.p.

<sup>2</sup> Bz. has: 'is converted'; [perhaps] in error.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits 'namely.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'twice repeats'—a loosely used phrase.] E.p. omits 'namely.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz. reads: 'and taken away' [*quitadas* for *quietas*], an error.

<sup>6</sup> H omits this last phrase, which is found in all the other Codices, and in e.p. The latter adds: 'notwithstanding that the soul is not wholly free from the temptations of the lower part.' The addition is made so that the teaching of the Saint may not be confused with that of the Illuminists, who supposed the contemplative in union to be impeccable, do what he might. The Saint's meaning is that for the mystical union of the soul with God such purity and tranquillity of senses and faculties are needful that his condition resembles that state of innocence in which Adam was created, but without the attribute of impeccability, which does not necessarily accompany union, nor can be attained by any, save by a most special privilege of God. Cf. St. Teresa's *Interior Castle*, VII, ii. St. Teresa will be found occasionally to explain points of mystical doctrine which St. John of the Cross takes as being understood.

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'part' for 'portion.'

<sup>8</sup> [*Lit.*, 'twice repeated.']

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'of these (as it were) substantial touches.'

union whereof we have just spoken; which, in concealment, and hidden from the perturbation of the devil, and of its own senses and passions, the soul has been receiving from the Divinity, wherein it has been purifying itself, as I say, resting, strengthening and confirming itself in order to be able to receive the said union once and for all, which is the Divine betrothal between the soul and the Son of God. As soon as these two houses of the soul have together become tranquillized and strengthened, with all their domestics—namely, the faculties and desires—and have put these domestics to sleep and made them to be silent with respect to all things, both above and below, this Divine Wisdom immediately unites itself with the soul by making a new bond of loving possession, and there is fulfilled that which is written in the Book of Wisdom, in these words:<sup>1</sup> *Dum quietum silentium contineret omnia, et nox in suo cursu medium iter haberet, omnipotens sermo tuus Domine a regalibus sedibus.*<sup>2</sup> The same thing is described by the Bride in the Songs,<sup>3</sup> where she says that, after she had passed by those who stripped her of her mantle by night and wounded her, she found Him Whom her soul loved.

4. The soul cannot come to this union without great purity, and this purity is not gained without great detachment from every created thing and sharp mortification. This is signified by the stripping of the Bride of her mantle and by her being wounded by night as she sought and went after the Spouse; for the new mantle which belonged to the betrothal could not be put on until the old mantle was stripped off. Wherefore, he that refuses to go forth in the night aforementioned to seek the Beloved, and to be stripped of his own will and to be mortified, but seeks Him upon his bed and at his own convenience, as did the Bride,<sup>4</sup> will not succeed in finding Him. For this soul says of itself that it found Him by going forth in the dark and with yearnings of love.

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'that which it [i.e., Wisdom] says.'

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom xviii, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Canticles v, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Canticles iii, 1.

## CHAPTER XXV

*Wherein is expounded the third stanza.<sup>1</sup>*

**In the happy night, In secret, when none saw me,  
Nor I beheld aught, Without light or guide, save that which  
burned in my heart.**

## EXPOSITION

**T**HE soul still continues the metaphor and similitude of temporal night in describing this its spiritual night, and continues to sing and extol the good properties which belong to it, and which in passing through this night it found and used, to the end that it might attain its desired goal with speed and security. Of these properties it here sets down three.

2. The first, it says, is that in this happy night of contemplation God leads the soul by a manner of contemplation so solitary and secret, so remote and far distant from sense, that naught pertaining to it, nor any touch of created things, succeeds in approaching the soul in such a way as to disturb it and detain it on the road of the union of love.

3. The second property whereof it speaks pertains to the spiritual darkness of this night, wherein all the faculties of the higher part of the soul are in darkness. The soul sees naught, neither looks at aught neither stays in aught that is not God, to the end that it may reach Him, inasmuch as it journeys unimpeded by obstacles of forms and figures, and of natural apprehensions, which are those that are wont to hinder the soul from uniting with the eternal Being of God.<sup>2</sup>

4. The third is that, although as it journeys it is supported by no particular interior light of understanding, nor by any exterior guide, that it may receive satisfaction therefrom on this lofty road—it is completely deprived of all this by this thick darkness—yet its love alone, which burns<sup>3</sup> at this time, and makes its heart to long for the Beloved, is that which now moves and guides it, and makes it to soar

<sup>1</sup> From e.p. Some of the Codices have 'Stanza the Third' and some simply 'Stanza.' Bz., P omit the whole chapter.

<sup>2</sup> So G, H, Mtr. [*Lit.*, 'that it may not unite itself in the ever being of God.' *Siempre*, 'ever,' 'always,' is normally an adverb.] A, B have: 'that it may not unite itself always and be with God.' C, M, e.p.: 'that it may not unite itself always with God.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'but it is love and faith which burn.'

upward to its God along the road of solitude, without its knowing how or in what manner.

There follows the line :

**In the happy night.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Thus end the majority of the MSS. Cf. pp. xlix–liii, 319–20, above, on the incomplete state of this treatise. The MSS. say nothing of this, except that in the Alba de Tormes MS. we read : ‘ Thus far wrote the holy Fray John of the Cross concerning the purgative way, wherein he treats of the active and the passive [aspect] of it as is seen in the treatise of the *Ascent of the Mount* and in this of the *Dark Night*, and, as he died, he wrote no more. And hereafter follows the illuminative way, and then the unitive.’ Elsewhere we have said that the lack of any commentary on the last five stanzas is not due to the Saint’s death, since he lived for many years after writing the commentary on the earlier stanzas.



VOLUME TWO

SPIRITUAL CANTICLE  
POEMS

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# SPIRITUAL CANTICLE

## INTRODUCTION

### THE 'SPIRITUAL CANTICLE': COMPOSITION AND ARGUMENT

IT was in his Toledo dungeon, where, in the course of the fierce struggles between the Calced and Discalced Carmelites; he was imprisoned as a recalcitrant friar, that St. John of the Cross composed the poem which we know as the *Spiritual Canticle*. In one of the darkest of dark nights which he had to endure, we can imagine him breaking into a song wrung from him by the sense of his Beloved's absence, a song as passionately inspired and as skilfully wrought as any that have ever come from human lips.

Although at most only the first thirty stanzas of the poem were written in the prison, and the pregnant exposition of it which forms the bulk of this volume is of a considerably later date, the entire composition is popularly connected with the experiences of Toledo, on account of the sense of desolation conveyed by the first stanza. It is a singularly ardent spirit that inspires the verses. Into them the Saint put his entire soul—and only from the commentary do we learn how much meaning is stored behind the vivid poetic imagery, of which much was taken from the *Song of Songs*, though some of it, as one likes to think, may have been suggested by the fragrance and verdure which surrounded his later life in fertile Andalusia.

The *Song of Songs* has always exercised a subtle charm upon those who have 'fallen in love with God.' Using the simple metaphor of Spouse and Bride, the sacred writer sketches a series of rapid dialogues between God and the soul, made brilliant with the most suggestive colours of nature. The fragrant vineyard, the fig-tree laden with fruit,

the voice of the turtle-dove and the springing of the flowers, the spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, myrrh and aloes, the fruitful valleys and green hills, flocks of goats, young roes, streams of Lebanon, beds of spices and gardens of lilies—all these and more speak to the mystic of the object of his love. So they spoke to St. John of the Cross, and one may be tempted to assert that never in their long and crowded history have the Songs inspired a greater masterpiece.

So instinct with beauty were the images of the *Spiritual Canticle*, and so captivating was the music of its rhythm, that many of the religious who first heard it found that it frequently recurred to the memory. Before long the Saint was continually being importuned to expound the poem. After some time, one of the dearest spiritual daughters, both of St. John of the Cross and of St. Teresa—Ana de Jesús—prevailed upon him to write a formal commentary upon it. His verses, it seems, were by this time on the lips of all nuns of the Discalced, and, as each would interpret them after her own manner, it was felt that their author should make an interpretation of them which would be authoritative.

Besides the original stanzas of the *Canticle* which had been written at Toledo, a number were composed at Baeza, while the last five were penned, and the poem was completed, at Granada. The commentary was begun at El Calvario (1578-9) and finished in 1584, when the Saint was acting as Prior and Confessor to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Granada. Unlike the expositions of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and the *Dark Night*, it adheres very closely to the text of the poem, and never allows the reader, as do the other commentaries at times, to forget it altogether. Partly for this reason the *Spiritual Canticle* will be found to have a lighter and a more poetic quality in its prose, more rapidity in the play of its symbols and metaphors, less proportion and harmony in its exposition and less erudition and density in its reasoning.

The Saint himself, in the commentary on the line 'The Bride has entered' of Stanza XXVII,<sup>1</sup> describes the argument of the whole book in a few words when he writes the following passage:

In order that we may expound the arrangement of these stanzas the more clearly, and describe the soul's habitual progress ere it come to this estate of the Spiritual Marriage, which is the highest of those that, with the help of God, we are now to describe, and to which the soul has now come, it is to be noted that first of all it exercised itself in the trials and bitternesses of

<sup>1</sup> [Note that P. Silverio's numbering of the stanzas corresponds to that of the first version given in the text below.]

mortification, and in meditation, as the soul said at the beginning, from the first stanza down to that which says: 'Scattering a thousand graces.' Afterward it passed through the pains and straits of love which have been described in the stanzas following, as far as that which says: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.' And in addition to this, the soul then relates how it has received great communications and many visits from its Beloved, wherein it has reached ever-increasing perfection and knowledge in His love, so much so that, passing beyond all things, and even beyond itself, it has surrendered itself to Him through union of love in the Spiritual Betrothal, wherein, as one that is now betrothed, it has received from the Spouse great gifts and jewels, even as it has described in its song, from the stanza wherein this Divine betrothal was made, and which says: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.'<sup>1</sup>

According to this passage, the soul, having exercised herself in the 'trials and bitternesses of mortification, and in meditation,' feels sudden and enkindling touches of love for God which impel her to go forth in search of the Beloved (Stanzas I-IV), to tell him how she languishes, suffers and dies.

For the soul that loves truly suffers ordinarily from feeling the absence of God in these three ways aforesaid, according to the three faculties of the soul, which are understanding, will and memory. She languishes in the understanding, because she sees not God, Who is the health of the understanding. She suffers as to the will, because she lacks the possession of God, Who is the rest, refreshment and delight of the will. She dies as to the memory, because, remembering that she lacks all the blessings of the understanding, which are the sight of God, and all the delights of the will, which are the possession of Him, and that it is likewise very possible to be deprived of Him for ever, she suffers at this memory as it were death.<sup>2</sup>

Leaping with irresistible impulse across the 'frontiers' (as the Bride expresses it) of the repugnance of the flesh for the spirit, she enquires of the woods, the thickets, the meadows and the flowers, if He that wounded her soul has passed that way; and the creatures, in a sublime and solemn hymn, make reply:

Rare gifts he scatterèd  
As through these woods and groves he pass'd apace,  
Turning, as on he sped,  
And clothing every place  
With loveliest reflection of his face.

This answer of the creatures, bearing witness to the greatness and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 132, below.

<sup>2</sup> Commentary to Stanza II, line 5. In these lines is described the incipient love of the Bride, developed in conformity with the teaching of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and the *Dark Night*.

excellence of God, enkindles her yet more with Divine love and increases the agony of her wound, so that she enters what the Saint calls the 'pains and straits of love.' The wound becomes, as it were, a festering sore, incurable, leading her into the afflictions and perils of death. She breaks out into the impassioned cry:

O crystal spring so fair,  
Might now within thy silvery depths appear,  
E'en as I linger there,  
Those features ever dear  
Which on my soul I carry graven clear!

Then God our Lord, moved by these heartfelt cries, approaches the soul, who, unaccustomed to such greatness, is drawn out from herself and falls into ecstasy, so that her natural life seems to be endangered. Unable, as she feels, to suffer such an excess of Divine beauty, she cries to the Beloved:

Withdraw thy gaze apart,  
For lo! I soar aloft.

Her love is still very imperfect, and therefore somewhat precipitate, or, as the Saint himself calls it, 'impatient,' like the love of Rachel when, because she had no children, she said to Jacob, *Da mihi liberos, alioquin moriar*. These impetuosities of love, which come after long exercise in the virtues and severe mortifications, are wonderfully described and analysed here by our great psychologist of mysticism. His entire description of this early period of Divine love, with its exuberances and impetuosities, and also with its evident signs of imperfection and inexperience, is drawn with a master-hand. Gradually, and perfectly naturally, without the slightest brusqueness, he leads us into the next and much more important stage in the progress of the loving soul, called the Spiritual Betrothal. We come, as it were, to a bridge that conducts us from the violent love which breaks forth in the heart to a love which is tranquil and at peace. Frequently characterized as it is by raptures, ecstasies and other extraordinary manifestations of grace, the transition suggests to St. John of the Cross a digression treating of these phenomena, but he refrains from making it because the phenomena have been so 'admirably' described by St. Teresa. This modest commendation,<sup>1</sup> it may be said in passing, is the only example of a eulogy of any except the sacred authors which St. John of the Cross makes in all his writings. For that very reason, in

<sup>1</sup> See p. 69, below.

spite of the restraint of its language, it is one of the most eloquent which St. Teresa ever received.

It is the twelfth stanza that may most properly be described as forming the bridge just mentioned, and as leading the soul from her unquiet, restless, violent affection into an enviably happy state of tranquillity and rest, surpassed only by the great goal of Union. From the twelfth stanza to the twenty-seventh, the Saint is writing of the Spiritual Betrothal between the soul and God, and describing its effects upon the soul and the soul's progress within it. The 'Annotation' of the beautiful expositions to Stanzas XIII and XIV synthesizes the effects which the Betrothal causes in the soul. The high mountains, the solitary wooded valleys, the tumultuous rivers, the breezes that whisper in contrast with the tranquil night, the silent music, the rising of the dawn—these and all the other similitudes are borrowed from Nature by one that is immersed in an ocean of love, so that the supreme beauty of the Beloved palpitates in his spirit, and he sings with unsurpassed inspiration. The similitudes continue in the following stanzas, in which the Bride describes, now the 'flowery bed' which the Beloved is preparing for her (XV), now the cellars of spiced wine and the Divine balsam (XVI, XVII), now the secret and most delectable science of love that she learns in the Beloved's bosom (XVIII, XIX). She loses herself, only to find herself again in the Divine heart, where she delights to make garlands of flowers 'gathered in the cool mornings' (XX, XXI). She takes her God prisoner in the golden mesh of her fair hair (XXII) and His eyes look upon her, leaving an impress of His Divine grace (XXIII).

It would seem, from the language of these stanzas, as if, in this state, the soul already had fruition of full and perfect happiness. And yet it is not so. Across the apparently clear blue sky are already floating some ominous clouds, which threaten to hide from the soul the Sun of her love, the source of her indescribable joy. The Betrothal is not the indissoluble bond of Union. Covetous men may yet seek after the soul, to put an end to her bliss, or, at least, to sully the pure and delectable stream from which she is hiding. Mindful of these dangers, the Bride once more speaks in tones of gentle melancholy (XXIV):

Ah, scorn me not, I pray,  
For if, in truth, uncomely once was I,  
Thy beauty came one day,  
And cloth'd my misery:  
Look then on me, thus shrouded, as I cry.

She knows that passions, appetites, imaginations, stirred up by her fierce enemy the devil, may well visit her and disturb this her peace. So she conjures the creatures to drive away these little foxes (XXV), lest they ruin her vineyard. She implores the 'dead north wind' to cease and the south wind, 'that wakenest love,' to breathe fragrance into her garden. She would have her spiritual life, not killed, but enriched and quickened.

Complete and unchangeable peace, a cloudless sky and spotless radiance can be enjoyed only in the highest state of all, that of perfection. For this the mystic has no name, so sublime is it; and, being as unable to describe it as to name it, he has recourse to the current symbol of daily life which corresponds to it most nearly. He calls it the Spiritual Marriage (XXVII).

The Bride enters here 'into the pleasant garden of her desire.' Her head 'reclining on the gentle arms of the Beloved,' she rests at her pleasure:

The soul having now done all in her power that the foxes may be driven away and the north wind may depart, since these have been hindrances and inconveniences impeding the perfect delight of the estate of the Spiritual Marriage; and having likewise invoked and obtained the breeze of the Holy Spirit (as has been described in the two preceding stanzas) which is the proper disposition and means for the perfection of this estate: it now remains to treat, in this stanza, of this estate, wherein the Spouse now speaks to the soul, calling her His Bride, and says two things. He says, first, that the soul, having issued forth victoriously, has now attained to this delectable estate of the Spiritual Marriage which both He and she had so greatly desired. The second thing that He does is to enumerate the properties of the said estate, of which properties the soul now has fruition in Him, and these are for her to rest at her pleasure and for her neck to recline upon the gentle arms of the Beloved.<sup>1</sup>

In the last thirteen stanzas of the poem the Saint develops his wonderful teaching upon the highest summit of perfection in the love of God which the soul can reach in this life, in which 'the Spouse reveals His wondrous secrets to the soul with great readiness and frequency, and describes His works to her, for true and perfect love can keep nothing hidden. And in particular He communicates to her sweet mysteries concerning His Incarnation and the mode and way of human redemption' (XXVIII). By means of the 'pleasant lyres,' which signify the sweetness now enjoyed by the soul, and of the

<sup>1</sup> Stanza XXVII, Exposition (p. 132, below).

'sirens' song,' which 'signifies the delight that He has ever in the soul,' He brings to an end all the operations and passions which before this had been able to trouble her quiet and peaceful joy in the Beloved. God now wills that all these shall cease, so that without any hindrance the soul may have fruition 'of the delight, peace and sweetness of this union' (XXIX, XXX). The soul, for her part, finding herself in possession of these rich and precious gifts of the Beloved, and being eager to retain them, conjures the nymphs of Judæa (that is, the lower part of human nature) not so much as to 'touch the thresholds' of the mansions in which she and the Beloved dwell (XXXI). Once she has succeeded in dispelling them she turns to the Beloved and, with unspeakable tenderness, cries to Him once more (XXXII) and is lovingly greeted in response (XXXIII). So, in the form of a dialogue of love, continues the incomparably beautiful idyll of this spiritual epithalamium until the Bride is completely transformed in the Beloved.

This, briefly, is the argument of the *Spiritual Canticle*, one of the loveliest poems that the human heart has ever conceived, or the human mind expressed. No man has known more of love than this Carmelite friar; few have known as much; and nowhere, certainly, outside Holy Scripture, is such knowledge expressed with greater profundity and eloquence than in this poem and its exposition.

The book is a gift of God to man. Few, it is true, are capable of savouring to the full its exquisite fragrance; only here and there do elect souls, like St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, the Little Flower, taste the plenitude of its spiritual satisfaction. Yet it is none the less a book for every true Christian who would partake of the choicest fruit of the tree of faith. All can find much in it to instruct and inspire them; and many who have devoted their lives to the love of God count it among the dearest of their possessions.

#### COPIES OF THE 'SPIRITUAL CANTICLE'

Many copies were made of this book, both in the lifetime of its author and shortly after his death. It may be because it was published twelve years later than his other works that the copies of it are more numerous. Of the first redaction of the *Canticle* nine copies are known, all of early date. Those most like the Sanlúcar copy (to which reference will shortly be made) are the manuscript of Gayangos (MS. 17,558 of the National Library, Madrid), the two of Valladolid and the edition

of Brussels (Cf. p. 17, below). To a second group of copies, which show considerable discrepancies from these, belonged no doubt the manuscript on which was based the edition of the *Canticle* published at Madrid in 1630 by P. Jerónimo de San José. As the copies of this second group are also of early date, it cannot be said that these variants are not the work of the Saint, who may well have retouched other copies than that of Sanlúcar, though we have no certain knowledge that he did.

*Copy of Sanlúcar de Barrameda.* Of all the copies which have come down to us, the most interesting is that highly valued codex which is in the possession of the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Sanlúcar de Barrameda, in the province of Cadiz, and which contains many interlinear and marginal notes in the hand of St. John of the Cross himself, as well as a most important note on the title-page, to which we shall presently refer.

In 1928 was published a facsimile edition of this copy,<sup>1</sup> which contains the Saint's principal poems, as well as the *Spiritual Canticle*. The title-page reads: 'Exposition of the stanzas which treat of the exercise of love between the Soul and Christ the Spouse, wherein are touched upon and expounded some points and effects of prayer, at the request of Mother Ana de Jesús, Prioress of the Discalced nuns at San José of Granada. The year 1584.' There follows a sketch of some artistic merit, and at the bottom of the page we read: 'This book is the rough copy of which a fair copy has already been made. Fray Juan de la Cruz.'

As the foundation of the convent of Carmelite nuns at Barrameda dates only from 1644, and it is not known how the Codex came into their possession, we can only make conjectures as to its earlier history. Its importance, which is so great as to give it primacy over all other known copies of St. John of the Cross's writings, consists in the numerous manuscript notes in his hand. Some of these correct errors of the amanuensis, others make additions to the text, while others again note down ideas which occurred to the Saint after the copy was made. All these are shown in the facsimile edition and are noted in the text below, as they occur.<sup>2</sup>

In the eighteenth century, P. Andrés de la Encarnación began work

<sup>1</sup> *Cántico Espiritual y Poesías de San Juan de la Cruz, según el Códice de Sanlúcar de Barrameda*. Edición del P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, C.D. Burgos, Tipografía de El Monte Carmelo, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> [In the translation below, only such notes as are relevant to the English rendering are, of course, given.]

on a new edition of the works of St. John of the Cross<sup>1</sup> and in the course of it made a careful and reflective study of these manuscript notes. The conclusion to which he came (1757), and which independent investigators unanimously confirmed, was that the hand in which all these additions are written is unquestionably the Saint's. Further, he said, it is clear from the title-page of the Sanlúcar Codex that two expositions of the *Spiritual Canticle* were composed by its author, and it is reasonable to suppose that the notes in that Codex were written with a view to their amplification in the second version. Carmelite critics since the time of P. Andrés have concurred in approving his conclusions, and sufficient specimens of St. John of the Cross's handwriting are now readily available for others to be able to form a judgment.<sup>2</sup> Investigators will not forget that the notes in the Sanlúcar Codex are marginal or interlinear, and that their author was therefore considerably cramped for space: this will account for certain differences of a general kind between the caligraphy of the notes and such writings as the Saint's letters in which his pen moved more freely. On the other hand, the nature of these very differences makes it extremely unlikely that the notes could have been the work of a forger.

Down to the present time nobody appears to have impugned the authenticity of the Sanlúcar notes, although M. Baruzi throws doubt upon the subscription on the title-page, both on internal and on partly external evidence.<sup>3</sup> Further reference will be made to this subject later.

We now add some notes on the other copies of the *Spiritual Canticle*, prefacing each with the abbreviation by which it is designated in the footnotes to the text below, and adding in brackets the usual description which is given of it, which, except where otherwise stated, indicates where it may be found.

V (Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Valladolid). Quite possibly a contemporary MS., well preserved, which differs only slightly from the Sanlúcar copy.

Vd (Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Valladolid). A second copy, very similar to the preceding but somewhat more carefully made. Neither V nor Vd has marginal notes of any kind.

G (Gayangos). This copy formerly belonged to the historian

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. lix, of this edition.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Autógrafos del Místico Doctor S. Juan de la Cruz*, Toledo, 1913; Baruzi: *Aphorismes de St. Jean de la Croix*, Bordeaux, 1904; etc.

<sup>3</sup> [P. Silverio summarizes M. Baruzi's contention in Vol. III, pp. xxi-xxiii, of his edition.]

Gayangos and is now in the National Library, Madrid (MS. 17,558). End of sixteenth century. It follows the Sanlúcar Codex throughout.

*Bj* (Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Bujalance). End of sixteenth century or beginning of seventeenth. Somewhat carelessly transcribed. There are differences between the stanzas at the beginning of the commentary and the same stanzas in the body of the text. A corrector has emended a number of the errors, probably without reference to any other copy. There are many variants from the Sanlúcar copy, especially in Stanzas I-IV, VIII, XIII, XX, XXIV, XXV, XXXVIII, XXXIX.

*Lch* (Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Loeches). End of sixteenth century. A carefully made copy having marginal corrections by the copyist. The many variants from Sanlúcar are similar to those of *Bj*, but not identical with them.

*Gr* (Granada: Colegio del Sacro Monte). Of comparatively recent acquisition. History unknown; there is no foundation for the natural supposition that it originally belonged to the Convento de los Mártires, Granada, where the Saint once lived, or for the more probable one that it was made for one of his Granada penitents. Date very early, possibly contemporary with the life of the Saint. Variants from Sanlúcar very similar to those of *Bj* and *Lch*.

8,654 (MS. 8,654, N.L.M.). History unknown, but date possibly in the first third of the seventeenth century. Text similar to *Bj*, *Lch*, *Gr*. Title reads: 'Spiritual stanzas wherein is touched the substance of the sacred Book of the Songs of Solomon, with a copious explanation of all the verses therein contained, full of admirable spiritual and mystical instruction for devout spiritual souls desirous of perfection and favoured by Our Lord, composed and expounded by our father Fray John of the Cross, first Discalced Carmelite<sup>1</sup> and Definitor in Chief of this Order.'

*Bz* (MS. 8,795, N.L.M.). This has already been referred to in the introduction to the *Dark Night*; it formerly belonged to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Baeza. Text similar to *Bj*, *Lch*, *Gr*.

## SECOND REDACTION OF THE 'SPIRITUAL CANTICLE'

In speaking of the Sanlúcar Codex we pointed out that the Saint, in his own writing, described it as the 'rough copy' from which a 'fair copy' had already been made. The Codex of the Discalced Carmelite

<sup>1</sup> [The word 'Carmelite' here is masculine. St. John of the Cross was in fact the first man to be admitted into the Reform.]

nuns of Jaén, with which we shall presently deal, and many others which are based upon it, incorporate a considerable number of the author's notes, either literally or in a modified and amplified form.

The *Canticle*, in this revised form, has been called the 'New Spiritual Canticle,' or a 'new form' of the *Canticle* or a 'second redaction,' the Sanlúcar copy, in this last case, representing the first. The name which we give to this form of the treatise is in itself of small importance, save as indicating its user's opinion of the significance of the variations. These are of three chief kinds: (1) the stanzas are linked with one another by means of an 'Annotation,' which is nearly always completely new; (2) the notes made by the Saint in the Sanlúcar copy are included in some form; (3) the order of the stanzas is rearranged, in conformity with the subject-matter. It is clear that, though this redaction of the *Canticle* is in no sense a new work, it is greatly changed in appearance throughout. All the stanzas have been revised, and most of them amplified—there being relatively few passages omitted which are in the Sanlúcar Codex. From the prologue (to which is added an 'Argument') onwards, there is hardly a stanza without some considerable change.

We may imagine the Saint writing the *Canticle* in its first form with almost feverish haste, for we can guess what the solitary of La Peñuela meant when he described the stanzas as having been written 'with a certain degree of fervour of love for God.'<sup>1</sup> And we imagine, too, his sternly disciplined mind at work, revising his own commentary, modifying its plan, providing it with a brief preliminary synopsis, connecting each stanza logically with the next<sup>2</sup>—all these modifications bespeak the careful teacher: they are improvements in method, not changes in substance.

Then, too, he adds long paragraphs to his expositions, so that the second redaction is a quarter as long again as the first. He incorporates about one hundred of the notes which he had made in the margins of the 'rough copy.' He adds to the poem and its exposition a new stanza, placed after the tenth,<sup>3</sup> probably because its introduction renders more natural and more progressive the increasing desire of the soul to see God. There is no reason whatever, on internal grounds, to impugn the authenticity of this stanza: it is as like the Saint's in style as are any of its companions.

<sup>1</sup> Prologue [p. 23, below].

<sup>2</sup> Except Stanzas II, III, IV, V, VII, which alone have no annotations.

<sup>3</sup> [See pp. 228-34, below.]

Finally, the Saint varies the order of the stanzas, in the way indicated by the following table, which also indicates in detail other differences between the two redactions [B = Codex of Sanlúcar de Barrameda; J = Codex of Jaén; St. = stanza; A = Annotation; § = Paragraph in this edition.]

[Prologue] B, J.

[Argument] J only.

*Stanzas*

B	J	
1	1	A in J only. Text greatly changed and §§ 7-12 added to it.
2	2	Text considerably changed.
3	3	Exposition greatly changed, especially that of the first and second lines.
4	4	B = J.
5	5	B = J. Last paragraph of B is used in J as A to St. 6.
6	6	Few and unimportant changes.
7	7	Few and unimportant changes. Last paragraph of B is used in J as A to St. 8.
8	8	Text considerably changed.
9	9	A in J only. Text somewhat changed.
10	10	A in J only. Changes in the last two lines.
11	12	A in J only. Text somewhat changed. § 9 in J only.
12	13	A in J only. Otherwise B = J.
13	14	The A in J is composed of the first lines of the exposition of B and a few more added to them. Otherwise few and unimportant changes.
14	15	Few changes. §§ 29-30 in J only.
15	24	A in J only. Text considerably changed. <sup>1</sup>
16	25	A in J only. Commentary on the last two lines somewhat changed.
17	26	A in J only. Commentary, especially on line 4, considerably changed.
18	27	A and § 8 in J only.
19	28	A in J only. Commentaries on ll. 4, 5, greatly changed.
20	29	A in J only. At the beginning of the commentary on the last line J adds a few lines.
21	30	A and §§ 10, 11 in J only.
22	31	A in J only. J adds a paragraph to the commentary on l. 3. Many changes in the commentary on ll. 4, 5.

<sup>1</sup> [This entry is omitted from the table as given by P. Silverio.]

- 23 32 A and §9 in J only. Changes in the last two lines.  
 24 33 A in J only. §4 in J greatly enlarged. Many and important changes elsewhere and additions to the commentary on l. 5.  
 25 16 A in J only and considerable changes in the text.  
 26 17 A in J only and considerable changes in the text.  
 27 22 A in J only and considerable changes in the text, especially in the commentary on l. 1.  
 28 23 Exposition in B becomes (with some changes) A in J. New exposition written for J; changes in commentary; and new § (6) in J.  
 29 20 A in J only. Exposition greatly changed. Commentary has few changes. §§ 12, 13, 14 are new in J.  
 30 21 Text greatly changed.  
 31 18 A in J only. Text somewhat changed.  
 32 19 A in J only. Considerable changes in commentary on ll. 3-5.  
 33 34 A in J only. A few lines are added to the commentary on l. 1, and many changes are made in the rest of the text.  
 34 35 The A in J is taken from the text of B, § 2 in J is new and the commentary on l. 5 is greatly changed.  
 35 36 A in J only. Commentary greatly changed.  
 36 37 A in J only. Commentary considerably changed.  
 37 38 A in J only. Some of the paragraphs are greatly changed.  
 38 39 A and § 2 in J only. Commentaries, especially those on ll. 1, 2, considerably changed.  
 39 40 J changes first lines of A, which is also the Exposition, and introduces many changes elsewhere.

It will be seen that, with regard to the position of the stanzas, the first fourteen stanzas and the last seven maintain their original position, the different numbering being due to the introduction of Stanza XI in the second redaction. The remaining stanzas are all re-arranged, though the majority of these are still similarly grouped: thus Stanzas XV-XXIV of the first redaction become Stanzas XXIV-XXXIII in the second, and the following are re-arranged in groups of two.

B	J	B	J
25	16	29	20
26	17	30	21
27	22	31	18
28	23	32	19

Yet we repeat that, in spite of all these changes, the *Spiritual Canticle* remains fundamentally the same. The argument of the book as given in Stanza XXVII of the first redaction and quoted above<sup>1</sup> is repeated in the corresponding stanza (XXII) of the second redaction, with much amplification and many changes which can be studied in the text of our edition.<sup>2</sup> The comparison will show the essential identity of the two plans: there are two modifications, neither of which can fairly be said to affect it.

(i) In the first redaction, fifteen stanzas describe the betrothal of the soul with Jesus Christ. In the second, only five (XII, XIII, XIV, XXV, XXVI) treat of this subject, the other ten (XV–XXIV) being transferred to the description of the Spiritual Marriage. Apparently these last seemed to the Saint better suited to a description of the most perfect state than to that of one which has not the same permanence and is liable to be interrupted by the agencies described in the poem. For this reason, too, four stanzas (XXXI, XXXII, XXIX, XXX) which in the first redaction describe, in one form or another, the disquiet experienced by the soul when it fears to lose its Beloved, and which had been assigned to the Spiritual Marriage, are in the second redaction transferred to the Betrothal. As it seems to us, the change is a distinct improvement and leaves the two states referred to much more precisely differentiated and clearly described.

(ii) 'And the last stanzas,' runs the second redaction, 'treat of the beatific estate, to which only the soul in that perfect estate aspires.'<sup>3</sup> In conformity with this, the latter part of the commentary is modified in order to introduce these desires of the soul for everlasting glory, the one means of attaining eternal union with the Beloved.

Of these modifications, which St. John of the Cross made in the *Spiritual Canticle* (recalling those of St. Teresa in the *Way of Perfection*),<sup>4</sup> very little account was taken by his contemporaries. There are very early descriptions which speak of the forty stanzas of the poem, but none of them gives any idea of the number or the importance of the changes made in the thirty-nine. Even so celebrated and learned a critic as P. Jerónimo de San José cannot have been aware of their significance when in his edition, as we shall shortly see, he merely added to the first redaction of the *Canticle* a stanza which he had seen in other copies. No more enlightened was P. Andrés de Jesús María, who, when publishing the second redaction, in 1703, complained

<sup>1</sup> [See p. 6, above.]

<sup>3</sup> [See p. 185, below.]

<sup>2</sup> [See pp. 291–6, below.]

<sup>4</sup> [See *C.W.S.T.J.*, II, xix–xxi.]

bitterly of what he called the infidelities and omissions of previous editors, who had, of course, been working from the first redaction. Later commentators followed the steps of one or the other of these. Only P. Andrés de la Encarnación, as written testimony left by him proves, perceived that there were two separate redactions of the *Canticle*, and even he did not grasp the full significance of this discovery.

As neither the first biographers of St. John of the Cross nor any of his contemporaries provide us with details as to how he composed his treatises, we have no information as to the manner or date of the composition of this second redaction of the *Canticle*. Since the two have so much in common, and the Saint was greatly occupied at the probable time to which we are referring, he no doubt worked upon some copy of the first redaction rather than wrote out the whole work anew, re-writing merely those stanzas into which he was introducing important modifications. When the revised work was completed in this way he would entrust the making of a fair copy to a competent amanuensis. This copy may well be the beautifully written Codex which now belongs to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Jaén and to which we shall presently return.

As to the date of the second redaction, it would probably be not much later than that of the completion of the first redaction—viz., 1584. The second was certainly finished in August 1586, since M. Ana de Jesús, with her own hands, gave a copy of it, which she had received from the Saint,<sup>1</sup> to M. Isabel de la Encarnación when the latter was still a novice at Granada, and this could not have been later than the departure of M. Ana for Madrid in August 1586, since the two never met again.

Further, in the commentary on Stanza XXXI, there is a reference to the 'exposition of the four stanzas which begin "O living flame of love"' as having been already composed.<sup>2</sup> This exposition we know to have been completed towards the end of 1585, soon after the Saint was elected Vicar-Provincial of Andalusia.

Once again, the reference to St. Teresa, already quoted from the commentary on Stanza XIII, speaks, both in the first (XII) and in the second redaction (XIII), of her works as about to be published. Since the decree, with which St. John of the Cross was concerned, authorizing the printing of her works, is dated September 1, 1586, he would undoubtedly have changed this phrase had the second redaction been

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. P. Silverio's edition, Vol. III, p. xli.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 342, below.

made after that date. Although this is by no means a conclusive deduction, it seems, together with the other available evidence, to indicate the approximate date already postulated for the second redaction.

### COPIES OF THE SECOND REDACTION OF THE 'CANTICLE'

Copies of the second redaction began to be made immediately it became known, and, of the nine which have come down to us, the greater number date from the sixteenth century. The most important is the Codex of Jaén, from which the variants are comparatively insignificant, and with which we deal first in order.

*Codex of Jaén.* This copy, which was the one given by St. John of the Cross to M. Ana de Jesús, belongs to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Jaén. Though by no means free from small inaccuracies, it was evidently made with great care. Its writing is not unlike that of the Saint: for centuries, indeed, it passed as his, and was so considered by its first editor, P. Andrés de Jesús María (1703). The copy was given by M. Isabel de la Encarnación, Prioress at Jaén (who had received it from M. Ana de Jesús)<sup>1</sup> to M. Clara de la Cruz, a later Prioress; both Prioresses made solemn and explicit declarations as to its history, which thus goes back directly to St. John of the Cross himself.

*Av* (Discalced Carmelite Nuns, Convent of San José, Avila). A well-preserved copy, written with great care in two hands; both these belong to the end of the sixteenth century. The text has few and unimportant variants from Jaén.

*Bg* (Discalced Carmelite Friars, Burgos). Possibly contemporary in date with St. John of the Cross. The text hardly differs from Jaén except in copyist's errors. The prologue is wanting and the forty stanzas come at the end of the commentary instead of following the argument.

*A* (Discalced Carmelite Friars, Alba de Tormes). Already described (Vol. I, p. 5). The only title which it gives to the work is *Via illuminativa*. The text has fewer variants from Jaén than any other copy but Av.

*B* (MS. 6,624, N.L.M.). Already described (Vol. I, p. 6). Begins, without title, at the word 'Prologue.' Text has a fair number of variants from Jaén, the most marked of which occur in Stanza XIII.

*Bz* (MS. 8,492, N.L.M.). End of sixteenth century. Somewhat care-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 2, above.

lessly copied, but with few save unintentional or unimportant variants from Jaén.

*Sg* (Discalced Carmelite Friars, Segovia). Lacks two folios and has many omissions. Contains more variants from Jaén than does *Av*, *Bg* or *A*; many of them appear to be aiming at greater clearness. Omits commentary on Stanza XIII, line 3 and Stanza XV, line 3. The codex is described on its title-page as an 'Ancient copy of the book of the Songs of our father St. John of the Cross, sanctified by the contact of his sacred hand and . . . appearing to contain some, though but a little, of his handwriting in corrections of the first twelve folios.' This last belief is no longer maintained.

*G* (MS. 18,160) and *Ej* (MS. 12,411), both in the National Library, Madrid, follow *Sg* in their general lines and are somewhat carelessly transcribed. Both end with Stanza XXXVIII.<sup>1</sup> *G*, which has already been mentioned (Vol. I, pp. 7, 323), formerly belonged to Gayangos: it has innumerable errors and occasionally abbreviates with some care. *Ej* (described in Vol. I, p. 323) omits lines and even paragraphs and is of no great importance.

#### CERTAIN EDITIONS OF THE 'SPIRITUAL CANTICLE'

Neither in the first collected edition of the works of St. John of the Cross (1618) nor in the second edition (1619) does the *Spiritual Canticle* find a place. The times were not favourable for the publication of anything that might appear to be a commentary on the *Song of Songs*, on account of the use made of that book by the Illuminists,<sup>2</sup> who were especially strong in certain parts of the Peninsula. The first country to publish the *Spiritual Canticle* was France, the translation, by René Gaultier, published at Paris in 1622, antedating the first edition in Spanish by five years.

In 1627, at Brussels, was published the first Spanish edition. Like Gaultier's translation, it is based on the first redaction and agrees very closely with the Sanlúcar Codex: it is referred to in our notes as *Br*. A number of errors in this edition are probably caused by the proof-correctors' ignorance of Spanish. In the same year (1627) an Italian translation of the works of St. John of the Cross, including the *Spiritual Canticle*, appeared in Rome. The next Spanish edition of St. John of the Cross, that of Madrid, 1630 (*Md*), has already been referred to (Vol. I, pp. liii-liv). It gives to P. Jerónimo de San José the honour

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 373, n. 1, below.

<sup>2</sup> [See *S.S.M.*, I, 37: 2nd. ed. I, 30.]

of being the first to publish the *Spiritual Canticle* in Spain. P. Jerónimo follows the Lch group of copies, which have a good many variants from the Sanlúcar Codex, as noted above.<sup>1</sup> There are few omissions in his text; occasionally he makes brief additions in the interests of precision, or in order to modify some phrase which might be unfortunately interpreted, much as did P. Salablanca in the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and other treatises of his Alcalá edition.<sup>2</sup> He also adds a few Latin texts to those given in the Codices of the first redaction. He includes Stanza XI of the Jaén redaction, which, if he was not acquainted with the Jaén copy, he no doubt took from Av. His edition served as a model for all its successors in the seventeenth century.

A Latin edition of the Works, published at Cologne in 1639, did much to spread a knowledge of them in German-speaking countries. The next important edition is that of Seville (S), published in 1703 by P. Andrés de Jesús María, referred to above;<sup>3</sup> it reproduced the Jaén MS. with considerable fidelity, adding a few Latin texts to the Saint's Spanish versions of them.

Until the publication (1912-14) of the three-volume Toledo edition of the works of St. John of the Cross by P. Gerardo de San Juan de la Cruz, the Seville edition was fairly generally followed. P. Gerardo gave to the Jaén redaction of the *Spiritual Canticle* the place of honour in his second volume, publishing the Sanlúcar redaction, with most of the Saint's manuscript notes, as an appendix.

### THE PRESENT EDITION

The importance of the Sanlúcar MS., as containing the Saint's notes, is so exceptional (especially as the extant autographs of St. John of the Cross are very few) that we publish it first in order (as is also demanded by its date); following it is the second redaction, on the basis of the Codex of Jaén.

The chief variants from the Sanlúcar Codex are given in footnotes, save that, where their number is very large, the passages in question are printed separately in the form of an appendix (pp. 385-408, below). These passages involve Stanzas I, II, III, IV, VIII, XIII (line 4), XX (Exposition only), XXIV, XXV, XXXVIII, XXXIX; the authorities which show these variants are Bz, Gr, Lch, Bj, 8,654 and Md.

When we began work upon this edition we studied as thoroughly

<sup>1</sup> See p. 10, above.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. liv.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I, p. l.

as possible, and in (we believe) an entirely unprejudiced spirit, the arguments which have been alleged in recent years against the genuineness of the second redaction of the *Canticle*, as contained in the Codex of Jaén. It was our intention, should these arguments convince us, not to publish this redaction at all. In view of the nature of the first redaction, the genuineness of which none can impugn, it seemed to us that comparatively little would be lost were the second redaction proved to be apocryphal. We could not find such great differences between the two as to feel that, if genuine, the second would add enormously to the value of the treatise or the reputation of its author. We had had no hesitation in denying to St. Teresa certain writings which have been traditionally ascribed to her, and elsewhere in this edition it will be seen that we have had to deny others to St. John of the Cross. In the same way we were perfectly prepared to be persuaded that the Jaén redaction of the *Canticle* was apocryphal.

But the arguments alleged have wholly failed to convince us, and, as a result, we print the second redaction immediately after the first, and elsewhere in this edition deal with the arguments alleged against its genuineness.<sup>1</sup> This second redaction appears to us to be a genuine and original work of St. John of the Cross and the Jaén MS. the most authoritative of its various versions. In the notes to the second redaction will be found the principal discrepancies from it contained in the other codices described above. We have not given them all, since the majority are due to the carelessness of copyists and of no great significance. Only in the Seville edition of 1703 do the variants occasionally involve attempts to improve upon the original otherwise than by substituting one word for another when the copyist was unable to understand a word or considered it obscure.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

As explained in the Translator's Preface (Vol. I, p. x), the foregoing introduction, like the other introductions in this edition, is an abridgement of the long prologue placed by P. Silverio at the head of his edition of the *Spiritual Canticle* (*Obras*, Vol. III, pp. vii-lxiv). At the conclusion of the volume (pp. 453-516) comes a detailed discussion of the genuineness of the second redaction of the *Canticle*, which takes the form of a reply to the contentions of the French Benedictine, Dom Philippe Chevallier, who is the protagonist in the attack upon this

<sup>1</sup> [See Translator's Note, below.]

redaction. We have not thought it either necessary or advisable to reproduce or excerpt from this discussion, which cannot be intelligently followed in any great detail without a knowledge of French and Spanish. We may, however, summarize P. Silverio's chief conclusions:

1. No conclusive proofs, either external or internal, have up to the present been alleged against the genuineness of the Jaén Codex and its group, which we therefore persist in regarding as the work of St. John of the Cross.

2. Stanza XI of this second redaction is undoubtedly genuine, and takes a natural place in the development of the Saint's theme, as revised by him.

3. The changes in the order of certain stanzas already referred to are due to the Saint's desire to give greater precision to his descriptions of the Spiritual Betrothal and the Spiritual Marriage.

4. The references to the soul's desires for the eternal possession of God in the beatific state which, in the second redaction, are attributed to the perfect, correspond to manuscript notes made by the Saint in the commentary on the final stanzas, in the Sanlúcar Codex, with a view to future development, which he executed in the second redaction.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Forty years have now passed since, in his article '*Le Cantique spirituel* de Saint Jean de la Croix a-t-il été interpolé?' (*Bulletin Hispanique*, 1922), Dom Philippe Chevallier launched his first attack upon the Jaén redaction, of which he rejected the authenticity, citing also *Amores de Dios y el alma*, a commentary on the *Spiritual Canticle* written by an Augustinian, P. Agustín Antolínez, as the source of the commentary on a stanza which he regarded as an interpolation. Subsequently Dom Philippe Chevallier published further articles (notably in *Vie Spirituelle*, 1926) and a critical edition of the *Spiritual Canticle* (1930), with notes and a French translation, in defence of his thesis, which received powerful support, notably from Jean Baruzi (1924), but also met with much opposition.

The controversy, as it stood in 1930, was judicially summed up in English by I. I. Macdonald (*Modern Language Review*, 1930, XXV, 165-84). Since then, however, it has continued and developed considerably, and in 1948 was given new life by the appearance of Jean Krynen's *Le 'Cantique Spirituel' de Saint Jean de la Croix commenté et*

*refondu au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. M. Krynen compares Antolínez's commentary, first with the admittedly authentic commentary of St. John of the Cross, and then with the redaction in the 1703 edition, concluding that, while Antolínez undoubtedly used the former, the latter was composed at a later date than his (Antolínez's) commentary, and draws on it continually. Further, he holds that the 'absolutely fundamental' doctrinal differences between the two redactions correspond to the doctrinal developments which occurred within the Carmelite school of mystical theology during the first post-Teresan generation, and ascribes the 1703 redaction to either the most distinguished member of that generation, P. Tomás de Jesús, or one of his disciples. This book has provoked voluminous criticism from Carmelite scholars and others, and an agreed solution of the problem seems as far off as ever.

As it is impossible to summarize briefly arguments which involve textual criticism, the reader is referred to that section of the bibliography in this edition (Vol. III, p. 419 ff.) which deals with the controversy, and in which all contributions of outstanding importance have been included.



## SPIRITUAL CANTICLE

*Exposition of the stanzas which treat of the exercise of love between the Soul and Christ the Spouse, wherein are touched upon and expounded some points and effects of prayer, at the request of Mother Ana de Jesús, Prioress of the Discalced at San José of Granada. The year 1584.*<sup>1</sup>

### PROLOGUE

FORASMUCH as these stanzas, religious Mother,<sup>2</sup> appear to be written<sup>3</sup> with a certain degree of fervour of love for God, Whose wisdom and love are so vast that, as is said in the Book of Wisdom,<sup>4</sup> they reach from one end to another, and the soul which is informed and moved by Him has to some extent this same abundance and impetus in its words, I do not now think of expounding all the breadth and plenteousness imbued in them by the fertile spirit of love, for it would be ignorance to think that sayings of love understood mystically, such as those of the present stanzas, can be fairly explained by words of any kind. For the Spirit of the Lord, Who helps our infirmity, as Saint Paul says, dwells in us and makes intercession for us, with groanings unutterable, pleading for that which we cannot well understand or comprehend, so as to express it ourselves.<sup>5</sup> For who can write down that which He reveals to loving souls wherein He dwells? And who can set forth in words that which He makes them to feel? And lastly, who can express that which He makes them to desire? Of a surety, none; nay, indeed, not the very souls through whom He passes. It is

<sup>1</sup> This is the title given in the Codex of Sanlúcar de Barrameda, from which some other manuscripts slightly differ. For the title of 8,654 see p. 10, above.

<sup>2</sup> The Venerable Ana de Jesús (Lobera), Prioress of the Discalced Carmelites of Granada. She was under the direction of the Saint, when he composed this treatise at her instances, and not at those of St. Teresa, as is said in the edition of Rome (1627). Of this venerable Mother much has already been said in the *Biblioteca Mística Carmelitana* [and in H., *ad loc.*]. Suffice it here to recall that she was a woman of great spirituality and a friend of St. Teresa, of Fray Luis de León and of St. John of the Cross. She introduced the Reform of St. Teresa into France and Belgium and died at Brussels on March 4, 1621. She was born on November 25, 1545, at Medina del Campo.

<sup>3</sup> The Codex of Bujalance begins: 'Forasmuch as these stanzas appear to be written after a religious manner.' Bz and Md omit: 'religious Mother.'

<sup>4</sup> Wisdom viii, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Romans viii, 26.

for this reason that, by means of figures, comparisons and similitudes, they allow something of that which they feel to overflow and utter secret mysteries<sup>1</sup> from the abundance of the Spirit, rather than explain these things rationally. These similitudes, if they be not read with the simplicity of the spirit of love and understanding embodied in them, appear to be nonsense rather than the expression of reason, as may be seen in the divine Songs of Solomon and in other books of Divine Scripture, where, since the Holy Spirit cannot<sup>2</sup> express the abundance of His meaning in common and vulgar terms, He utters mysteries<sup>3</sup> in strange figures and similitudes. Whence it follows that no words of holy doctors, albeit they have said much and may yet say more, can ever expound these things fully, neither could they be expounded in words of any kind. That which is expounded of them, therefore, is ordinarily the least part of that which they contain.

2. Since these Stanzas, then, have been composed under the influence of a love which comes from abounding mystical understanding, they cannot be fairly expounded, nor shall I attempt so to expound them, but only to throw upon them some light of a general kind (since your Reverence has so desired). And this I think to be best, for the sayings of love are better left in their fullness, so that everyone may pluck advantage from them according to his manner and to the measure of his spirit, than abbreviated in a sense to which not every taste can accommodate itself. And thus, although they are expounded after a certain manner, there is no reason why anyone should be bound to this exposition. For mystical wisdom (which comes through love, whereof the present Stanzas treat) needs not to be understood distinctly in order to produce love and affection in the soul; it is like to faith, whereby we love God without understanding Him.

3. I shall therefore be very brief, although I shall be unable to refrain from extending myself in certain places where the matter requires it, and where occasion offers to expound and treat certain points and effects of prayer, for since there are many such in the Stanzas I cannot refrain from treating of some. But I shall leave aside the commonest of them and note briefly the most extraordinary, which come to pass in those<sup>4</sup> that, by the favour of God, have left behind the beginners' state. And this for two reasons: the one, that there are so many things written for beginners; the other, that I speak herein with your Reverence by your command, and to your Reverence Our Lord

<sup>1</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'mystical secrets.'

<sup>3</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'speaks mystically.'

<sup>2</sup> Lch, 8,654, Md: 'desires not to.'

<sup>4</sup> Md: 'those souls.'

has granted the favour of drawing you forth from these beginnings and leading you farther onward into the bosom of His Divine love. Thus I trust that, although I write here of certain points of scholastic theology concerning the interior commerce of the soul with its God, it will not be in vain to have talked somewhat after the manner of pure spirit; for though your Reverence may lack the practice of scholastic theology, wherein are comprehended Divine verities, you lack not that of mystical theology, which is attained through love, and wherein these verities are not only known but also experienced.

4. And to the end that all I say (which I desire to submit to better judgment, and entirely so to that of Holy Mother Church) may be the better received, I think not to affirm aught that is mine, trusting to my own experience, or to that of other spiritual persons of which I have known, or to that which I have heard from them (although I purpose to make use of both) unless it be confirmed and expounded by authorities from Divine Scripture, at the least in those things which appear to be the most difficult of comprehension. Wherein I shall follow this manner—to wit, that first I shall set down the text in its Latin and then shall expound it with respect to the subject which it illustrates. And first I shall set down all the Stanzas together, and then in order shall set down each one separately with intent to expound it;<sup>1</sup> whereof I shall expound each line, setting it down at the beginning of its exposition.

#### END OF THE PROLOGUE

### SONGS BETWEEN THE SOUL AND THE SPOUSE<sup>2</sup>

#### BRIDE

1. Whither hast thou hidden thyself, And hast left me, O Beloved, to my sighing?  
Thou didst flee like the hart,<sup>3</sup> having wounded me: I went out after thee, calling,<sup>4</sup> and thou wert gone.<sup>5</sup>
2. Shepherds, ye that go Yonder, through the sheepecotes, to the hill,  
If perchance ye see him that I most love, Tell ye him that I languish, suffer and die.

<sup>1</sup> Lch, 8, 654, Md: 'I shall expound them, setting down each one separately, with the exposition thereof, in order.'

<sup>2</sup> The stanzas are not numbered in the original.

<sup>3</sup> Bj, Bz, G, V, Md: 'Like (a) hart.' 8, 654: 'That didst flee like (a) hart.'

<sup>4</sup> 'I went out sadly calling' is a copyist's error in one version.

<sup>5</sup> Br: 'thou wert already gone.' Lch: 'and thou wert already gone.'

3. Seeking my loves, I will go o'er yonder mountains<sup>1</sup> and banks;  
I will neither pluck the flowers nor fear the wild beasts;  
I will pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.

#### QUESTION TO THE CREATURES

4. O woods and thickets Planted by the hand of the Beloved!<sup>2</sup>  
O meadow of verdure, enamelled with flowers, Say if he  
has passed by you.

#### ANSWER OF THE CREATURES

5. Scattering a thousand graces, He passed through these  
groves in haste,  
And, looking upon them as he went, Left them, by his  
glance<sup>3</sup> alone, clothed with beauty.<sup>4</sup>

#### BRIDE

6. Ah, who will be able to heal me! Surrender thou thyself  
now completely.<sup>5</sup>  
From to-day do thou send me now<sup>6</sup> no other messenger,  
For they cannot tell me what I wish.
7. And all those that serve Relate<sup>7</sup> to me a thousand graces of  
thee,  
And all wound me the more And something that they are  
stammering leaves me dying.
8. But how, O life,<sup>8</sup> dost thou persevere, Since thou livest not  
where thou livest,  
And since the arrows make thee to die which thou receivest  
From the conceptions of the Beloved which thou formest  
within thee?
9. Since thou hast wounded this heart, Wherefore didst thou  
not heal it?  
And wherefore, having robbed me of it, hast thou left it thus  
And takest not the prey that thou hast spoiled?

<sup>1</sup> G, V: 'fields.'

<sup>2</sup> Lch, 8,654, Md: 'of my Beloved.'

<sup>3</sup> [The word translated 'glance' is *figura*, elsewhere in the text rendered 'face,' 'image,' 'form.']

<sup>4</sup> G, Lch, V, 8,654, Md: 'with his beauty.'

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'Complete the surrendering of thyself now truly.']

<sup>6</sup> Lch, V omit 'now.'

<sup>7</sup> [Lit., 'are relating.']

<sup>8</sup> Gr, Lch, 8,654, Br, Md: 'O soul.'

10. Quench thou my griefs, Since none suffices to remove them,  
And let mine eyes behold thee, Since thou art their light  
and for thee alone I wish to have them.
11. O crystalline fount, If on that thy silvered surface  
Thou wouldst of a sudden form<sup>1</sup> the eyes desired Which I  
bear outlined in my inmost parts!
12. Withdraw them, Beloved, for I fly away.

## THE SPOUSE

Return thou, dove,

For the wounded hart appears on the hill At the air of thy  
flight, and takes refreshment.

## THE BRIDE

13. My Beloved, the mountains, The solitary, wooded valleys,  
The strange islands, the sonorous rivers, The whisper of  
the amorous breezes,
14. The tranquil night, At the time of the rising of the dawn,  
The silent music, the sounding solitude, The supper that  
recreates and enkindles love.
15. Our flowery bed, Encompassed with dens of lions,  
Hung<sup>2</sup> with purple and builded in peace, Crowned<sup>3</sup> with a  
thousand shields of gold.
16. In the track of<sup>4</sup> thy footprint The young girls<sup>5</sup> run along  
by the way.  
At the touch of a spark, at the spiced wine, Flows forth<sup>6</sup>  
the Divine balsam.
17. In the inner cellar, of my Beloved have I drunk, And, when  
I went forth over all this meadow,  
Then knew I naught And lost the flock which I followed  
aforetime.

<sup>1</sup> G: 'show.'

<sup>2</sup> So (*tendido*) Bj, Gr, Lch. Bz, G, Y, Vd, Br, Md have *teñido*: 'dyed.' 8,654 has *De. púrpura vestido*: 'clothed with purple.'

<sup>3</sup> V, Vd: 'Surrounded.'

<sup>4</sup> [Or simply 'behind,' 'after,' as in the current Spanish phrase.

<sup>5</sup> Bz, V: 'the youths.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'emissions of,' without a verb.]

18. There he gave me his breast; There he taught me a science  
most delectable;  
And I gave myself to him indeed, reserving nothing;  
There I promised him to be his bride.
19. My soul has employed<sup>1</sup> itself And all my possessions in his  
service:  
Now I guard no flock nor have I now other office, For now  
my exercise is in loving alone.
20. If, then, on the common land, From henceforth I am  
neither seen nor found,  
You will say that I am lost; That, wandering love-stricken,  
I lost my way<sup>2</sup> and was found.<sup>3</sup>
21. With flowers and emeralds Gathered in the cool mornings<sup>4</sup>  
We will make the garlands flowering in thy love And  
interwoven with one hair from my head.
22. By that hair alone Which thou regardedst fluttering on my  
neck,  
Beholding it upon my neck, thou wert captivated, And  
wert wounded by one of mine eyes.
23. When thou didst look on<sup>5</sup> me, Thine eyes imprinted upon  
me thy grace;<sup>6</sup>  
For this cause didst thou love me greatly, Whereby mine  
eyes deserved to adore that which they saw in thee.
24. Despise me not, For, if thou didst find me swarthy,  
Now canst thou indeed look upon me, Since thou didst  
look upon me and leave in me grace and beauty.
25. Catch us the foxes, For our vineyard is now in flower,  
While we make a bunch of roses, And let none appear upon  
the hill.<sup>7</sup>
26. Stay thee, dead north wind. Come, south wind, that  
awakenest love;<sup>8</sup>  
Breathe through my garden and let its odours flow, And  
the Beloved shall pasture<sup>9</sup> among the flowers.

<sup>1</sup> V: 'surrendered.'<sup>2</sup> [Or 'I became lost.']<sup>3</sup> [*ganada*, *lit.*, 'gained.']<sup>4</sup> Lch: 'mountains.'<sup>5</sup> [The verb is *mirar*, more conveniently translated 'regard' in Stanza XXII and its commentary.]<sup>6</sup> Bj: 'their grace.'<sup>7</sup> Bj: 'upon the countryside.'<sup>8</sup> [*Lit.*, 'loves.']<sup>9</sup> G reads *parezca* for *pacerá*: i.e., 'And let the Beloved appear . . .'

## SPOUSE

27. The Bride has entered Into the pleasant garden of her desire,<sup>1</sup>  
And at her pleasure rests, Her neck reclining on the gentle arms of the Beloved.
28. Beneath the apple-tree, There wert thou betrothed to me;  
There did I give thee my hand And thou wert redeemed where thy<sup>2</sup> mother had been corrupted.
29. Birds of swift wing,<sup>3</sup> Lions, harts, leaping does,  
Mountains, valleys, banks, waters, breezes, heats, And terrors that keep watch by night,
30. By the pleasant lyres And by the sirens' song, I conjure you,  
Cease your wrath<sup>4</sup> and touch not the wall, That the Bride may sleep more securely.

## BRIDE

31. O nymphs of Judæa, While mid the flowers and rose-trees the ambar sends forth perfume,  
Dwell in the outskirts And desire not to touch our thresholds.
32. Hide thyself, dearest one, And look with thy face upon the mountains,  
And desire not to speak, But look upon her companions<sup>5</sup> who travels mid strange islands.

## SPOUSE

33. The little white dove Has returned to the ark with the bough,  
And now the turtle-dove Has found the mate of her desire<sup>6</sup> on the green banks.
34. In solitude she lived And in solitude now has built her nest,  
And in solitude her dear one alone guides her, Who likewise in solitude was wounded by love.

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'pleasant desired garden.']

<sup>2</sup> The original has *su* (his, her) for *tu* (thy): a clear error.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the light birds.']

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'Let your wraths cease.']

<sup>5</sup> Some MSS. have *compañías* ('countries') for *compañías* ('companions,' *fem.*).

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'her desired mate.']

## BRIDE

35. Let us rejoice, Beloved, And let us go to see ourselves in  
thy beauty,  
To the mountain or the hill where flows the pure water;  
Let us enter farther into the thicket.
36. And then we shall go forth To the lofty caverns of the rock  
which are well hidden,  
And there shall we enter And taste the new wine of the  
pomegranates.
37. There wouldst thou show me That which my<sup>1</sup> soul  
desired,<sup>2</sup>  
And there at once, my life, wouldst thou give me That  
which thou gavest me the other day.
38. The breathing of the air, The song of the sweet philomel,  
The grove and its beauty in the serene night, With a flame  
that consumes and gives no pain.<sup>3</sup>
39. For none saw it, Neither did Aminadab<sup>4</sup> appear,  
And there was a rest from the siege, And the cavalry came  
down<sup>5</sup> at the sight of the waters.

<sup>1</sup> Bz: 'thy.'

<sup>2</sup> [The verb is not *desear*, but *pretender*, to aim at, lay claim to, strive for.]

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'and burns not at all.'

<sup>4</sup> The copyist of Vd, not understanding this word, wrote *a mi nada*, thus causing the line to read: 'neither did aught appear to me.'

<sup>5</sup> ['Dismounted' is a more appropriate rendering here, but the nature of the commentary favours a word of more general meaning.]

END

BEGINNETH THE EXPOSITION OF THE STANZAS  
BETWEEN THE BRIDE AND THE SPOUSE

STANZA THE FIRST<sup>1</sup>

**Whither hast thou hidden thyself, And hast left me, O Beloved,  
to my sighing?**

**Thou didst flee like the hart, having wounded me: I went out  
after thee, calling, and thou wert gone.**

EXPOSITION

**I**N this first stanza, the soul that is enamoured of the Word, the Son of God, her Spouse, desiring to be united with Him through clear and essential vision, sets forth her love's anxieties, reproaching Him for His absence, the more so because, being wounded by her love, for the which she has abandoned all things, yea even herself, she has still to suffer the absence of her Beloved and is not yet loosed from her mortal flesh that she may be able to have fruition of Him in the glory of eternity. And thus she says:

**Whither hast thou hidden thyself?**

2. It is as though she said: O Word, my Spouse, show me the place where Thou art hidden. Wherein she begs Him to manifest His Divine Essence; for the place where the Son of God is hidden is, as Saint John<sup>2</sup> says, 'the bosom of the Father,' which is the Divine Essence, the which is removed and hidden from every mortal eye and from all understanding. This Isaias signified when he said: 'Verily Thou art a hidden God.'<sup>3</sup> Here it is to be noted that, however lofty are the communications of a soul with God in this life, and the revelations of His presence, and however high and exalted is its knowledge of Him, they are not

<sup>1</sup> [In the first Appendix to Vol. III of P. Silverio's edition, some important variant passages from the Granada group of MSS. are given. These are translated in the Appendix, pp. 385-408, below. The notes that are given here with respect to these passages refer only to G, V, Vd, Br.]

<sup>2</sup> St. John i, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Isaias xlv, 15. The Saint here corrects (a copyist's error) *escogido* to *escondido*.

God in His Essence, nor have they aught to do with Him. For in truth He is still hidden from the soul, and it ever beseems the soul, amid<sup>1</sup> all these grandeurs, to consider Him as hidden, and to seek Him as One hidden, saying: 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?' For neither is a sublime communication of Him nor a sensible revelation of His presence a clearer testimony of His presence, nor is aridity or the want of all these things in the soul the less clear testimony thereof. For which cause says the prophet Job: *Si venerit ad me, non videbo eum; et si abierit, non intelligam.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: If He (that is to say, God) comes to me, I shall not see Him; and if He departs, I shall not understand Him. Wherein is to be understood that, if the soul should experience any great communication or knowledge of God, or any other feeling, it must not for that reason persuade itself that it possesses God more completely or is more deeply in God; nor that that which it feels and understands is God in His Essence, however profound such experiences may be; and, if all these sensible and intelligible communications fail, it must not think that for that reason God is failing it.<sup>3</sup> For in reality the one estate can give no assurance to a soul that it is in His grace, neither can the other, that it is outside it. As the Wise Man says: *Nemo scit utrum amore an odio dignus sit.*<sup>4</sup> Which is to say: No mortal man can know if he be worthy of the grace or of the hatred of God. So that the intent of the soul in this present line is not merely to beg for sensible and affective devotion, wherein there is neither certainty nor clear evidence of the possession of the Spouse in this life by grace, but also to beg for the presence and clear vision of His Essence, wherewith it desires to be given assurance and satisfaction in glory.

3. This same thing was signified by the Bride in the Divine Songs when, desiring union and fellowship with the Divinity of the Word her Spouse, she begged the Father for it, saying: *Indica mihi, ubi pascas, ubi cubes in meridie.*<sup>5</sup> Which is to say: Show me where Thou feedest, and where Thou liest in the midday. For to enquire of Him where He fed was to beg that she might be shown the Essence of the Divine Word, for the Father glories not, save in the Word, His only Son, neither feeds upon aught else. And to beg Him to show her where He lay in the midday was to beg that selfsame thing, since the Father lies not, neither is present in any place, save in His Son, in Whom He lies, communicating to Him all His Essence—'in the midday,' which is in

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'above.']

<sup>2</sup> Job ix, 11.

<sup>3</sup> [Or 'is wanting to it,' 'is absent from it,' but the original has the same verb where we have rendered 'fail . . . is failing.']

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes ix, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Canticles i, 6.

Eternity, where He ever begets Him. It is this pasture, then, where the Father feeds, and this flowery bed of the Divine Word, whereon He lies hidden from every mortal creature, that the Bride-Soul entreats when she says: 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

4. And it is to be observed, if one would learn how to find this Spouse (so far as may be in this life), that the Word, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is hidden essentially in the inmost centre of the soul. Wherefore the soul that would find Him through union of love must go forth and hide itself from all created things according to the will, and enter within itself in deepest recollection, communing there with God in loving and affectionate fellowship, esteeming all that is in the world as though it were not. Hence Saint Augustine, speaking with God in the *Soliloquies*, said: 'I found Thee not, O Lord, without, because I erred in seeking Thee without that wert within.'<sup>1</sup> He is, then, hidden within the soul, and there the good contemplative must seek Him, saying: 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

**And hast left me, O Beloved, to my sighing?**

5. The Bride calls Him 'Beloved,' in order the more to move and incline Him to her prayer, for, when God is loved indeed, He hears the prayers of His lover with great readiness; and then in truth He can be called Beloved when the soul is wholly with Him and has not its heart set on aught that is outside Him. Some call the Spouse 'Beloved' when He is not in truth their Beloved, because they have not their heart wholly with Him; and thus, before the Spouse, their petition is of less effect.

6. And in the words which she then says: 'And hast left me to my sighing,' it is to be observed that the absence of the Beloved is a continual sighing in the heart of the lover, because apart from Him she loves naught, rests in naught and finds relief in naught; whence a man will know by this if he have indeed love toward God—namely, if he be content with aught that is less than God. To this sighing Saint Paul referred clearly when he said: *Nos intra nos gemimus, expectantes adoptionem filiorum Dei*.<sup>2</sup> That is: We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption and possession of sons of God. Which is as though he said: Within our heart, where we have the pledge, we feel that which afflicts us—to wit, the absence. This, then, is the sighing which the soul ever makes, for sorrow at the absence of her Beloved, above all when, having enjoyed some kind of sweet and delectable communion

<sup>1</sup> *Soliloquies*, Chap. xxxi [cf. p. 189, n. 8].

<sup>2</sup> Romans viii, 23.

with Him, she is left dry and alone. For this cause she grieves greatly, and says next:

**Thou didst flee like the hart,**

7. Here it is to be observed that in the Songs the Bride compares the Spouse to the hart and the mountain goat, saying: *Similis est dilectus meus capræ hinnuloque cervorum*.<sup>1</sup> That is: My Beloved is like to the goat, and to the young of the harts. And this because of the swiftness wherewith He hides and reveals Himself, as the Beloved is wont to do in the visits which He makes to the soul, and in the withdrawals and absences which He makes them experience after such visits. In this way He makes them to grieve the more bitterly for His absence, as the soul now declares when she says:

**Having wounded me:**

8. Which is as though she had said: Not sufficient of themselves were the sorrow and grief which I suffer ordinarily in Thy absence: Thou didst wound me yet more, by love, with Thine arrow; and, having increased my passion and desire for the sight of Thee, didst flee with the swiftness of the hart and allowedst not Thyself to be in the smallest degree comprehended.

9. For the further exposition of this line we must know that, beside many other different ways wherein God visits the soul, wounding it and upraising it in love, He is wont to bestow on it certain enkindling touches of love, which like a fiery arrow strike and pierce the soul and leave it wholly cauterized with the fire of love. And these are properly called the wounds of love, whereof the soul here speaks. So greatly do these wounds enkindle the will in affection that the soul finds itself burning in the fire and flame of love, so much so that it appears to be consumed in that flame, which causes it to go forth from itself and be wholly renewed and enter upon another mode of being, like the phoenix, that is burned up and re-born anew. Of this David speaks and says: *Inflammatum est cor meum, et renes mei commutati sunt et ego ad nihilum redactus sum, et nescivi*.<sup>2</sup> Which is to say: My heart was kindled and my reins were changed and I was brought to nothing and I knew not. The desires and affections, which the Prophet here describes as reins, are all stirred, and in that loving enkindlement of the heart are changed into Divine affections, and the soul through love is reduced

<sup>1</sup> Canticles ii, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxxii, 21 [A.V., lxxiii, 21-2].

to naught, and knows naught, save love only. And at this season of love there takes place this stirring of these reins of the desires of the will, which is much like to a torture of yearning to see God—so much so that the rigour wherewith love treats the soul seems to it intolerable; not because it has been wounded thereby<sup>1</sup> (for aforesaid it held such wounds of love to be health), but because it is left thus wounded and grieving, and has not been wounded further, even to the point of death, in the which case it would see itself united with Him in a clear and revealed vision of perfect love. Wherefore the soul magnifies or describes the pain of the wound of love caused her by this absence, and says: 'Having wounded me.'

10. And thus there comes to pass in the soul this grief<sup>2</sup> that is so great, inasmuch as when God inflicts upon the soul that wound of love its will rises with sudden celerity to the possession of the Beloved, Whom it has felt to be near by reason of that His touch of love which it has experienced. And with equal celerity it feels His absence and is conscious of sighing thereat, since in one and the same moment He disappears from the soul and hides Himself, and it remains in emptiness and with the greater sorrow and sighing according to the greatness of its desire to possess Him. For these visits of love that wound are not like<sup>3</sup> others wherein God is wont to refresh and satisfy the soul by filling it with gentle peace and repose. These visits He makes to wound the soul rather than to heal it, and to afflict rather than to satisfy, since they serve but to quicken the knowledge and increase the desire, and, consequently, the pain. These are called wounds of love, and are most delectable to the soul, for which cause it would fain be ever dying a thousand deaths from these lance-thrusts, for they cause it to issue forth from itself and enter into God. This the Bride expresses in the line following, saying:

**I went out after thee, calling, and thou wert gone.**

11. There can be no medicine for the wounds of love save that which comes from him that dealt the wounds. For this cause the soul says that she went out, calling—that is, after Him that had wounded her—begging for medicine and crying out at the violence of the burning<sup>4</sup> that was caused by the wound. And it must be known that this going out is understood in two ways: the one, a going forth from all

<sup>1</sup> G, V, Vd: 'wounded by love.'

<sup>2</sup> Vd, Br: 'thought.' G, V omit several words here.

<sup>3</sup> The Sanlúcar amanuensis omitted 'like,' which the Saint himself inserts.

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'strength of the fire.']

things, which she does by despising and abhorring them; the other, a going forth from herself, by forgetting and neglecting herself, which she does by holy abhorrence of herself<sup>1</sup> through love of God; and this raises her after such wise that it makes her to go out from herself and from her judgment<sup>2</sup> and the ways that are natural to her, and to call for God. And to these two ways of going forth the soul refers when she says: 'I went out'; for both these, and no less, are needful for one that would go after God and enter within Him. And thus it is as though she said: By this Thy touch and wound of love, my Spouse, Thou hast drawn me forth, not only from all things, from which Thou hast far withdrawn me, but likewise from myself (for truly it seems at such a time that God is drawing the soul away from her very flesh) and hast raised me up to Thyself, so that I cry for Thee and loose myself from all things that I may cling to Thee.<sup>3</sup> 'And Thou wert gone.'

12. As though she had said: At the time when I desired to possess Thy presence I found Thee not, and for Thy sake I remained empty and loosed from all things, and yet I bound not myself to Thee; I was buffeted woefully by<sup>4</sup> the gales of love and found support neither in myself nor in Thee. This going forth in order to go to God, as the soul here terms it, is called by the Bride in the Songs to 'rise,' where she says: *Surgam et circuibo civitatem, per vicos et plateas quæram quem diligit anima mea, quæsiivi illum et non inveni.*<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: I will rise and go about the city; in the streets and the broad ways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth. I sought Him and I found Him not. This rising is here understood, spiritually, as of an ascent from the low to the high, which is the same as to go out from oneself—that is, from one's own low way of life and love of self to the high love of God. But she gives it to be understood that she was afflicted because she found Him not. Thus one that is enamoured of God goes through this life ever in affliction, for he is already surrendered to God, and has expectation of being paid in the same coin—to wit, by the surrender to him of the clear possession and vision of God, for which he 'calls' and which in this life is not granted him. He has lost himself already for love of God, yet has found no gain to compensate him for his loss, for he lacks the said<sup>6</sup> possession of the Beloved for which he lost himself.

<sup>1</sup> G, V: 'by despising and abhorring herself.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, *quicios*, 'hinges'. Cf. the metaphorical English phrase 'to become unhinged'.]

<sup>3</sup> The Saint corrects the amanuensis' error: 'may loose myself from Thee.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, *penando en*, 'suffering', 'agonizing in'.]

<sup>5</sup> [Canticles iii, 2.]

<sup>6</sup> G, V: 'the Divine.'

Wherefore, if a man goes about afflicted for God, it is a sign that he has given himself to God and that he loves Him.

13. This affliction and sorrow for the absence of God is wont to be so great in those that are approaching ever nearer to perfection, at the time of these Divine wounds, that, if the Lord provided not for them, they would die. For, as they have kept the palate of the will and the spirit clean, healthy and well prepared for God, and as in that experience whereof we have spoken He gives them to taste something of the sweetness of love, for which they yearn above all things, therefore do they likewise suffer above all things. For there is shown to them in glimpses an immense good and it is not granted to them; wherefore their affliction and torment are unspeakable.

## STANZA II

**Shepherds, ye that go Yonder, through the sheepcotes, to the hill,  
If perchance ye see him that I most love, Tell ye him that I languish, suffer and die.**

## EXPOSITION

**I**N this Stanza the soul seeks to make use of intercessors and intermediaries with her Beloved, begging them to tell Him of her pain and affliction; for it is a characteristic of the lover, when she cannot commune with her Beloved because of His absence, to do so by the best means that she may. And so at this point the soul would fain use her desires, affections and sighs as messengers, who are also able to make known the secrets of her heart. And thus she says:

**Shepherds, ye that go**

2. Calling the affections and desires shepherds, because they feed the soul on spiritual good things. For shepherd<sup>1</sup> signifies 'one who feeds,' and by their means God communicates Himself to her (which without them He does not). And she says: 'Ye that go.' That is to say, Ye that go forth from pure love; because they go not all to God, but those only that go forth from faithful love.

**Yonder, through the sheepcotes, to the hill,**

<sup>1</sup> [The Spanish word is *pastor*, which is more appropriate here than 'shepherd.']

3. By the 'sheepcotes' she means the choirs of the angels, by whose ministry, from choir to choir, our sighs and prayers travel to God; Whom she calls 'the hill,' because the hill is high, and, even so, God is the greatest of all heights; and because in God, as on the hill, are spied out<sup>1</sup> and seen all things. To Him go our prayers, which the angels offer Him, as we have said; for it is they who offer Him our prayers and desires,<sup>2</sup> according as the angel said to holy Tobias, in these words: *Quando orabas cum lachrymis et sepeliebas, etc., ego obtuli orationem tuam Domino.*<sup>3</sup> Which is to say: When thou didst pray with tears and didst bury the dead, I offered thy prayer unto the Lord. We can likewise understand by these shepherds of whom the soul here speaks the angels themselves, for not only do they bear our messages to God but they also bring God's messages to our souls, feeding our souls, like good shepherds, with sweet inspirations and communications from God, which He also creates by means of them. And they protect us from the wolves, who are the evil spirits, and defend us from them like good shepherds.

### If perchance ye see . . .

4. This is as much as to say: If my good fortune and happiness are such that ye reach His presence so that He sees you and hears you. Here it is to be observed that, although it is true that God knows and understands all things, and sees and observes even the least of the thoughts of the soul, yet He is said to see our necessities, or to hear them, when He relieves them or fulfils them; for not all necessities or all petitions reach such a point that God hears them in order to fulfil them, until in His eyes the number of them is sufficient and there has arrived the proper time and season to grant them or relieve them.<sup>4</sup> And then He is said to see them or to hear them, as may be seen in the Book of Exodus, where, after the four hundred years during which the children of Israel had been afflicted in the bondage of Egypt, God said to Moses: *Vidi afflictionem populi mei in Egipto et clamorem ejus audivi et descendi liberare eum.*<sup>5</sup> That is: I have seen the affliction of My people and have heard their cry; and I am come down to deliver them. Yet He had ever seen it, but He said that He had seen it only when He willed to fulfil their request by His deed. Even so said Saint

<sup>1</sup> ['... Como en el otero, se otean y ven todas las cosas.' The play upon words cannot be rendered in English.]

<sup>2</sup> V, Vd, Br omit: 'and desires.'

<sup>3</sup> Tobias xii, 12.

<sup>4</sup> Br has: 'grant them or hear them,' and omits: 'and . . . to hear them.'

<sup>5</sup> Exodus iii, 7, 8.

Gabriel to Zacharias: *Ne timeas, Zacharia, quoniam exaudita est deprecatio tua.*<sup>1</sup> Which is to say: Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard. That is, He now granted him the son for which he had been begging Him many years; yet He had ever heard him. And thus it is to be understood by every soul that, albeit God may not at once hearken to its necessity and prayer, yet it follows not that, if they merit it, He will not hearken to them when the time is opportune and due. For, as David says, He is *Adjutor in opportunitatibus in tribulatione.*<sup>2</sup> That is: a helper in due time and in tribulation. This, then, is signified here by the soul that says, 'If perchance ye see . . .': 'If by my good fortune the time and season has arrived wherein my desires and petitions have reached the point at which He<sup>3</sup> sees them to fulfil them for me.'

. . . **him that I most love,**<sup>4</sup>

5. That is to say: more than all things; and, speaking ideally, when the soul loves Him more than all things is when naught that presents itself to her impedes her from doing and suffering, whatsoever it be, for His sake. To Him, then, Whom she most loves, she sends her desires as messengers with the petition of her needs and afflictions, saying:

**Tell ye him that I languish, suffer and die.**

6. Three kinds of need the soul represents here, to wit: languor, suffering and death; for the soul that loves truly suffers ordinarily from feeling the absence of God in these three ways aforesaid, according to the three faculties of the soul, which are understanding, will and memory. She languishes in the understanding, because she sees not God, Who is the health of the understanding. She suffers as to the will, because she lacks the possession of God, Who is the rest, refreshment and delight of the will. She dies as to the memory, because, remembering that she lacks all the blessings of the understanding, which are the sight of God, and all the delights of the will, which are the possession of Him, and that it is likewise very possible to be deprived of Him for ever, she suffers at this memory as it were death.

7. These three needs Jeremias likewise represented to God, saying: *Recordare paupertatis meæ, absynti et fellis.*<sup>5</sup> Which is to say: Remember

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke i, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm ix, 10 [A.V., ix, 9].

<sup>3</sup> The Sanlúcar amanuensis had 'God,' which the Saint altered to 'He.'

<sup>4</sup> Br reads, obviously in error [*to* for *ye*]: 'Him that to-day I most love.'

<sup>5</sup> Lamentations iii, 19.

my poverty, the wormwood and the gall. The poverty refers to the understanding, because to it belong the riches of the wisdom of God, wherein, as Saint Paul says, are hid all the treasures of God.<sup>1</sup> The wormwood, which is a herb most bitter, refers to the will, for to this faculty belongs the sweetness of the possession of God: lacking which, the soul is left with bitterness, even as the Angel said to Saint John in the Apocalypse, in these words: *Accipe librum, et devora illum, et faciet amaricari ventrem tuum.*<sup>2</sup> Which is to say: Take the book and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter—the belly being taken to mean the will. The gall refers to the memory, and signifies the death of the soul, even as Moses writes in Deuteronomy, when he speaks of the damned, saying: *Fe draconum vinum eorum, et venenum aspidum insanabile.*<sup>3</sup> That is: Their wine will be the gall of dragons and the venom of asps, which is incurable. This signifies there the lack of God, which is the death of the soul; and these three needs and afflictions are founded upon the three theological virtues—faith, charity and hope—which relate to the three faculties aforementioned: understanding, will and memory.

8. And it is to be observed that in the line aforementioned the soul does no more than represent her need and affliction to the Beloved. For one that loves discreetly has no care to beg for that which he lacks and desires, but only shows forth his need, so that the Beloved may do that which seems good to Him.<sup>4</sup> As when the Blessed Virgin spake to the beloved Son at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, not begging Him directly for wine, but saying: 'They have no wine.'<sup>5</sup> Or as when the sisters of Lazarus sent to Him, not to say that He should heal their brother, but to tell Him to see how he whom He loved was sick.<sup>6</sup> And the reason for which it is better for the lover to show forth his need to the Beloved than to beg Him to fulfil it is threefold. First, because the Lord knows our necessities better than we ourselves; second, because the Beloved has the greater compassion when He beholds the necessity of His lover and is moved when He sees his resignation; third, because the soul is on surer ground with respect to self-love and love of possession if she represents her need than if she begs Him for that whereof she believes herself to have need. It is precisely this that the soul does

<sup>1</sup> Colossians ii, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Apocalypse x, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy xxxii, 33.

<sup>4</sup> V, Vd: 'For one that loves discreetly does no more than show forth his need and suffering to the Beloved, without begging for that which he lacks and desires, so that the Beloved may do that which seems good to Him.' G omits a few sentences here.

<sup>5</sup> St. John ii, 3.

<sup>6</sup> St. John xi, 3.

in this present line, where she represents her three necessities. For to say: 'Tell ye Him that I languish, suffer and die' is, as it were, to say: Since I languish, and He alone is my health, may He give me my health. Since I suffer, and He alone is my rest, may He give me my rest. Since I die, and He alone is my life, may He give me my life.<sup>1</sup>

## STANZA III

**Seeking my loves, I will go o'er yonder mountains and banks;  
I will neither pluck the flowers nor fear the wild beasts; I will  
pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.**

## EXPOSITION

**N**OT content with prayers and desires, and with making use of intercessors in order that she may speak with the Beloved, as she did in the preceding stanzas, the soul, over and above all this, sets to work herself to seek Him. This she says in this stanza that she must do: in the search for her Beloved she must practise virtues and mortifications in the contemplative and the active life; and to this end she must accept no comforts or good things, nor must all the powers and snares<sup>2</sup> of the three enemies—world, devil and flesh—suffice to detain and hinder her. So she says:

**Seeking my loves,**

2. That is to say, my Beloved.

**I will go o'er yonder mountains and banks;**

3. The virtues she calls 'mountains': first, by reason of their loftiness; second, because of the difficulty and toil which are experienced in climbing them, through the practice of the contemplative life. And she describes as 'banks' the mortifications and subjections and self-despising which she practises in this respect in the active life; for in order to acquire the virtues there is need of both. This, then, is as much as to say: Seeking my Beloved, I will ever put into practice the lofty virtues and abase myself in mortifications and things lowly. This she

<sup>1</sup> Br omits a few words here, through an error of the copyist or printer, reading: 'Since I suffer, and He alone is my life, may He give me life.'

<sup>2</sup> G, V omit: 'and snares.'

says, because the way to seek God is ever to be doing good in God, and mortifying evil in oneself, after the manner following:

**I will neither pluck the flowers . . .**

4. Inasmuch as in order to seek God it is needful to have a heart that is detached and strong, free from all evil things and from good things that are not simply God, the soul speaks, in this present line and in those which follow, of the liberty and the courage which she must have in order to seek Him. And herein she says that she will not pluck the flowers that she may find on the way, whereby she means all the pleasures and satisfactions and delights which may be offered her in this life and which might obstruct her road if she should desire to pluck or accept them. These things are of three kinds: temporal, sensual and spiritual. And because they all occupy the heart, and, if the soul should pay heed to them or abide in them, are an impediment to its attainment of such detachment of spirit as is needful in order to follow the straight road to Christ, she says that in seeking Him she will not pluck all these flowers aforementioned. And thus it is as if she had said: I will not set my heart upon the riches and good things which the world offers, nor will I accept the satisfactions and delights of my flesh, neither will I pay heed to the pleasures and consolations of my spirit, in such manner as to be kept from seeking my loves over the mountains and banks of virtues and trials. This she says because she has accepted the counsel which the prophet David has given to those that go by this road, saying: *Divitiæ si affluent nolite cor apponere*.<sup>1</sup> That is: If riches abound, apply not your heart to them. This, too, she understands of sensual pleasures, as also of the majority of<sup>2</sup> temporal blessings and spiritual consolations. Here it is to be observed that not only do temporal blessings and corporeal delights hinder us and turn us aside from the road to God, but likewise spiritual delights and consolations, if we attach ourselves to them or seek after them, obstruct the road to the Cross of our Spouse Christ. Wherefore it behoves him that will go forward not to turn aside and pluck these flowers. And not only so, but it behoves him also to have the courage and the fortitude to say:

**. . . nor fear the wild beasts;**

**I will pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.**

5. In these lines the Bride speaks of the three enemies of the soul,

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxi, 11 [A.V., lxii, 10].

<sup>2</sup> MSS and editions: 'as of other,' etc.

which are world, devil and flesh, and these are they that war upon her and make her way difficult.<sup>1</sup> By the 'wild beasts' she understands the world; by the 'mighty,' the devil; and by the 'frontiers,' the flesh.

6. She calls the world 'wild beasts,' because to the imagination of the soul that sets out upon the road to God the world seems to be represented after the manner of wild beasts, which threaten her fiercely, and this principally in three ways. First, the favour of the world will leave her, and she will lose friends, credit,<sup>2</sup> reputation and even property. Secondly—a wild beast no less terrifying—she must be able to bear the renunciation for ever of the satisfactions and delights of the world, and of all worldly comforts. Thirdly—and this is worse still—the tongues of men will rise up against her, and will mock her, and will proffer many sayings and gibes against her, and will set her at naught. These things are wont to prejudice certain souls in such a way that it becomes supremely difficult for them, not only to persevere against these wild beasts, but even to be able to set out upon the road at all.

7. But a few more generous souls<sup>3</sup> are wont to meet other wild beasts, which are more interior and spiritual—difficulties and temptations, tribulations and trials of many kinds through which they must needs pass. Such God sends to those whom He will raise to high perfection, by proving and refining them as gold in the fire, even as in one place David says: *Multæ tribulationes justorum*.<sup>4</sup> That is: Many are the afflictions of the just, but out of them all will the Lord deliver them. But the soul that loves indeed, that prizes her Beloved above all things and that trusts in His love and favour, finds it not hard to say: 'Nor will I fear the wild beasts.'

### **I will pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.**

8. Evil spirits, who are the second enemy, she calls 'the mighty,' because with a great display of strength they endeavour to seize the passes of this road, and likewise because their temptations and wiles are stronger and harder to overcome,<sup>5</sup> and more difficult to penetrate, than those of the world and the flesh, and furthermore because they reinforce themselves with these other two enemies, the world and the flesh, in order to make vigorous warfare upon the soul. Wherefore

<sup>1</sup> Br: 'full of difficulties.'

<sup>2</sup> G: 'friends, knowledge, credit.' V, Vd, Br add: 'favour.'

<sup>3</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'But a few securer souls.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xxxiii, 20 [A.V., xxxiv, 19].

<sup>5</sup> Br omits: 'to overcome.'

David, speaking of them, calls them mighty, saying: *Fortes quæsierunt animam meam*.<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: The mighty sought after my soul. Concerning their might, the prophet Job says also: 'There is no power upon earth that can be compared with that of the devil, who was made to fear no one.'<sup>2</sup> That is, no human power can be compared with his; and thus, only the Divine power suffices to be able to conquer him and only the Divine light to penetrate his wiles. Wherefore the soul that is to overcome his might will be unable to do so without prayer, nor will it be able to penetrate his deceits without humility and mortification. Hence Saint Paul, in counselling the faithful, says these words: *Induite vos armaturam Dei, ut possitis stare adversus insidias diaboli, quoniam non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem*.<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: Put on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil, for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood. By blood he means the world; and by the armour of God, prayer and the Cross of Christ, wherein is the humility and mortification whereof we have spoken.

9. The soul also says that she will cross<sup>4</sup> the frontiers, whereby, as we have said, she indicates the repugnance which the flesh has of its nature to the spirit and the rebellions which it makes against it. As Saint Paul says:<sup>5</sup> *Caro enim concupiscit adversus spiritum*.<sup>6</sup> That is: For the flesh lusteth against the spirit. It sets itself, as it were, upon the frontier, and resists those that travel on the spiritual road. And these frontiers the soul must cross, by surmounting these difficulties and, by the force and resolution of the spirit, overthrowing all the desires of sense and the natural affections; for, so long as these remain in the soul, the spirit is impeded by their weight so that it cannot pass on to true life and spiritual delight. This Saint Paul sets clearly before us, saying: *Si spiritu facta carnis mortificaveritis, viveritis*.<sup>7</sup> That is: If by the spirit you mortify the inclinations and desires of the flesh, you shall live. This, then, is the procedure which the soul says in this stanza that she must needs follow in order to seek her Beloved along this road. Briefly, she must have constancy and resolution not to stoop to pluck the flowers; courage not to fear the wild beasts;<sup>8</sup> and strength to pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers; and she must determine only to go

<sup>1</sup> Psalm liii, 5 [A.V., liv, 3].

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians vi, 11.

<sup>5</sup> G, V, Vd, Br read: 'whereby she indicates, as Saint Paul says,' and omit all that stands between these two phrases in the text.

<sup>6</sup> Galatians v, 17.

<sup>8</sup> G, V, Vd, Br omit this phrase.

<sup>2</sup> Job xli, 24 [A.V., xli, 33].

<sup>4</sup> Br: 'crosses.'

<sup>7</sup> Romans viii, 13.

over the mountains and banks, which are the virtues,<sup>1</sup> after the manner already expounded.

## STANZA IV

**O woods and thickets Planted by the hand of the Beloved!<sup>2</sup>  
O meadow of verdure, enamelled with flowers, Say if he has  
passed by you.**

## EXPOSITION

**A**FTER the soul has described<sup>3</sup> the way wherein she will prepare herself for setting out upon this road, namely, by courage not to turn aside after delights and pleasures, and fortitude to conquer temptations and difficulties, wherein consists the practice of self-knowledge, which is the first thing that the soul must achieve in order to come to the knowledge of God, she now, in this stanza, sets out upon her road, through consideration and knowledge of the creatures, to the knowledge of her Beloved, their Creator. For, after the practice of self-knowledge, this consideration of the creatures is the first thing in order upon this spiritual road to the knowledge of God; by means of them the soul considers His greatness and excellence, according to that word of the Apostle where he says: *Invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi per ea quæ facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur.*<sup>4</sup> Which is as much as to say: The invisible things of God are known by the soul through the invisible and created visible things. The soul, then, in this stanza, speaks with the creatures, asking them for news of her Beloved. And it is to be observed that, as Saint Augustine says,<sup>5</sup> the question that the soul puts to the creatures is the meditation that she makes by their means upon their Creator. And thus in this stanza is contained a meditation on the elements and on the other lower creatures,<sup>6</sup> and a meditation upon the heavens and upon the other creatures and material things that God has created therein, and likewise a meditation upon the celestial spirits. She says:

**O woods and thickets**

<sup>1</sup> The Sanlúcar copy had not the words 'which are the virtues,' which were added by the Saint and are not found in the other versions.

<sup>2</sup> The same variants occur here as in the stanza of the complete poem. See p. 26, n. 2, above.

<sup>3</sup> G, V, Vd: 'given' [i.e., shown].

<sup>4</sup> Romans i, 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Confessions*, Bk. X, Chap vi.

<sup>6</sup> G, V, Vd: 'And thus this meditation treats of the elements and all the other creatures.'

2. She describes as 'woods' the elements, which are earth, water, air and fire; for, like the most pleasant woods, they are peopled thickly with creatures, which here she calls 'thickets' by reason of their great number and the many differences which there are between those in each element. In the earth, innumerable varieties of animals and plants;<sup>1</sup> in the water, innumerable different species of fish; and in the air, a great diversity of birds; while the element of fire concurs with all in animating and preserving them; and thus each kind of animal lives in its element, and is set and planted therein as in its own wood and region where it is born and nurtured. And in truth, God so commanded when He created them:<sup>2</sup> He commanded the earth to produce plants and animals; and the sea and the waters, fish; while He made the air the dwelling-place of birds. Wherefore, when the soul sees that thus He commanded and thus it was done, she says as in the line that follows:

### **Planted by the hand of the Beloved!**

3. In this line is the following consideration—namely,<sup>3</sup> that these varieties and wonders could be made and nurtured only by the hand of the Beloved, God. Here it is to be observed that she says intentionally 'by the hand of the Beloved'; for albeit God performs many other things by the hands of others, as by angels or men, He never performed the act of creation, neither performs it, save by His own hand. And thus the soul is greatly moved to love her Beloved, God, by the consideration of the creatures, seeing that these are things that have been made by His own hand. And she says furthermore:<sup>4</sup>

### **O meadow of verdure,**

4. This consideration is upon Heaven, which she calls 'meadow of verdure,' because the things that are created therein<sup>5</sup> have ever unfading greenness<sup>6</sup> and neither perish nor wither with time; and in them, as among fresh verdure, the just take their pleasure and delight; in the which consideration likewise is comprehended all the diversity of the beauteous stars and other celestial planets.

5. This name of verdure the Church gives likewise to heavenly things when, praying to God for the souls of the departed, and speak-

<sup>1</sup> The words 'and plants' are an addition of the Saint's, not found in the MSS. or the old editions.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis i.

<sup>3</sup> 'Namely' is added by the Saint and is not in the MSS.

<sup>4</sup> These four words are added by the Saint and are not in the MSS. or the old editions.

<sup>5</sup> G: 'because the things that are in Heaven.'

<sup>6</sup> V: 'because the things that are in Heaven endure, and are ever with unfading greenness.'

ing to them, she says: *Constituatur vos Dominus inter amœna virentia.* 'This signifies: May God set you among the delectable verdure.<sup>1</sup> And she says also that this meadow of verdure is likewise

**Enamelled with flowers,**

6. By these flowers she understands the angels and the holy souls, wherewith that place is adorned and beautified like a graceful and costly enamel upon an excellent vase of gold.

**Say if he has passed by you.**

7. This question is the consideration spoken of above, and it is as if she said: Say what excellences He has created in you.

STANZA V

**Scattering a thousand graces, He passed through these groves  
in haste,  
And, looking upon them as he went, Left them, by his glance  
alone, clothed with beauty.<sup>2</sup>**

EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza the creatures make answer to the soul, which answer, as Saint Augustine says also in that same place,<sup>3</sup> is the testimony which in themselves they bear to the soul concerning the greatness and excellence of God, and for which the soul asks in its meditation. And thus that which is contained in this stanza is in its substance<sup>4</sup> that God created all things with great facility and brevity<sup>5</sup> and in them left some trace of Who He was; not only did He give them<sup>6</sup> being out of nothing, but He even endowed them with innumerable graces and virtues, making them beauteous with marvellous orderliness and unfailing interdependence, and doing all this through His wisdom whereby He created them, which is the Word, His Only-begotten Son. She says, then, thus:

**Scattering a thousand graces,**

<sup>1</sup> C, V: 'celestial verdure.'

<sup>2</sup> G, Lch, V, 8, 654, Md: 'with his beauty.' See p. 26, n. 4, above.

<sup>3</sup> *Confessions*, Bk. X, Chap. vi.

<sup>4</sup> Sanlúcar, V, Vd, Br read: 'And thus that which is contained in this stanza which in its substance is . . .'

<sup>5</sup> Br has only: 'with facility.'

<sup>6</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'leave them.'

2. By these thousand graces which she says He scattered as He went<sup>1</sup> is understood the innumerable multitude of the creatures. She sets down here the greatest number, which is a thousand, in order to denote their multitude. She calls them graces, by reason of the many graces wherewith He endowed every creature; and, scattering them—that is to say, peopling the whole world with them—

**He passed through these groves in haste,**

3. To pass through the groves is to create the elements, which here she calls groves. Through these she says He passed, scattering a thousand graces, because He adorned them with all the creatures, which are full of grace. And, moreover, He scattered among them the thousand graces, giving them virtue that they might be able to contribute to the generation and conservation of them all. And she says that He passed, because the creatures are, as it were, a trace of the passing of God, whereby are revealed His greatness,<sup>2</sup> power, wisdom and other Divine virtues. And she says that this passing was in haste, because the creatures are the lesser works of God, Who made them as it were in passing. The greater works, wherein He revealed Himself most clearly and which He wrought most lovingly,<sup>3</sup> were those of the Incarnation of the Word and the mysteries of the Christian faith, in comparison wherewith all the rest were wrought, as it were, in passing, and in haste.

**And, looking upon them as he went, Left them, by his glance<sup>4</sup> alone, clothed with beauty.**

4. According to Saint Paul, the Son of God is the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance.<sup>5</sup> It must be known, then, that God looked at all things in this image of His Son alone, which was to give them their natural being, to communicate to them many natural gifts and graces and to make them finished and perfect, even as He says in Genesis, in these words: 'God saw all the things that He had made and they were very good.'<sup>6</sup> To behold them and find them very good was to make them very good in the Word, His Son. And not only did He communicate to them their being and their natural graces when He beheld them, as we have said, but also in this image of His Son alone

<sup>1</sup> The Saint's correction of the copyist's 'would go' [*iba* for *iria*].

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'whereby traces are left of His greatness.']

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to which He paid most heed.']

<sup>4</sup> See p. 26, n. 3, above.

<sup>5</sup> Hebrews i, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis i, 31.

He left them clothed with beauty, communicating to them supernatural being. This was when He became man, and thus exalted man in the beauty of God, and consequently exalted all the creatures in him, since in uniting Himself with man He united Himself with the nature of them all. Wherefore said the same Son of God: *Si ego exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad me ipsum*.<sup>1</sup> That is: I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. And thus, in this lifting up of the Incarnation of His Son, and in the glory of His resurrection according to the flesh, not only did the Father beautify the creatures in part, but we can say<sup>2</sup> that He left them all clothed with beauty and dignity.

5. But, besides all this, speaking now somewhat according to the sense and the affection of contemplation, in the vivid contemplation and knowledge of the creatures, the soul sees with great clearness that there is in them such abundance of graces and virtues and beauty wherewith God endowed them, that, as it seems to her, they are all clothed with marvellous natural beauty,<sup>3</sup> derived from and communicated by that infinite supernatural beauty of the image of God, Whose beholding of them clothes the world and all the heavens with beauty and joy; just as does also the opening of His hand whereby, as David says: *Imple omne animal benedictione*.<sup>4</sup> That is to say: Thou fillest every animal with blessing. And therefore the soul, being wounded in love by this trace of the beauty of her Beloved which she has known in the creatures, yearns to behold that invisible beauty, and speaks as in the stanza following.

<sup>1</sup> St. John xii, 32.

<sup>2</sup> Sanlúcar, 8,654, V, Vd, Br, Md: 'we shall be able to say.'

<sup>3</sup> G, V: 'abundance of graces and virtues and natural beauty.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm cxliv, 16 [A.V., cxlv, 16]. Md completes the quotation *Aperis tu manum tuam* . . ., but omits the Spanish translation here given.

## STANZA VI

**Ah, who will be able to heal me! Surrender thou thyself now completely.**

**From to-day do thou send me now<sup>1</sup> no other messenger, For they cannot tell me what I wish.**

## EXPOSITION

**A**s the creatures have given the soul signs of her Beloved, by revealing to her in themselves traces of His beauty and excellence, her love has increased, and in consequence the pain which she feels at His absence has grown (for the more the soul knows of God, the more grows her desire to see Him); and when she sees that there is naught<sup>2</sup> that can cure her pain save the sight and the presence of her Beloved, she mistrusts any other remedy, and in this stanza begs Him for the surrender and possession of His presence, entreating Him from that day forth to entertain her with no other knowledge and communications from Himself, since these satisfy not her desire and will, which is contented with naught less than the sight and presence of Him. Wherefore, she says, let Him be pleased to surrender Himself in truth, in complete and perfect love, and thus she says:

**Ah, who will be able to heal me!**

2. As though she had said: Among all the delights of the world and the satisfactions of the senses, and the consolations and sweetness of the spirit, naught<sup>3</sup> of a truth will be able to heal me, naught will be able to satisfy me. And since this is so:

**Surrender thou thyself now completely.<sup>4</sup>**

3. Here it is to be noted that any soul that truly loves cannot wish to gain satisfaction and contentment<sup>5</sup> until it truly possess God. For not only do all other things fail to satisfy it, but rather, as we have said, they increase its hunger and desire to see Him as He is. And thus, since each visit that the soul receives from the Beloved, whether it be of knowledge, or feeling, or any other communication soever (which are

<sup>1</sup> Lch, V omit 'now.'

<sup>2</sup> Br, Vd and the Sanlúcar amanuensis: 'and as there is naught.' The correction, in the Saint's hand, agrees with all other versions.

<sup>3</sup> G, V: 'no one.'

<sup>5</sup> G, V, Vd, Br omit: 'and contentment.'

<sup>4</sup> [See p. 26, n. 5, above.]

like messengers that communicate to the soul some knowledge of Who He is, increasing and awakening the desire the more, even as crumbs increase a great hunger), makes it grieve at being entertained with so little, the soul says: 'Surrender Thou Thyself now completely.'

4. Since all that can be known of God in this life, much though it be, is not complete knowledge,<sup>1</sup> for it is knowledge in part and very far off, while to know Him essentially is true knowledge, which the soul begs here, therefore she is not content with these other communications, and says next:

**From to-day do thou send me now no other messenger,**

5. As though she were to say: Permit me not henceforward to know Thee thus imperfectly through these messengers—to wit, by the knowledge and the feelings that I am given of Thee, so far distant and removed from that which my soul desires of Thee. For to one who grieves for Thy presence, well knowest Thou, my Spouse, that the messengers bring an increase of affliction: for the one reason, because with the knowledge of Thee that they give they re-open the wound; for the other, because they seem but to delay Thy coming. Wherefore from this day forth do Thou send me no more of such far distant knowledge, for if until now I could make shift with it, since I neither knew Thee nor loved Thee much, now the greatness of the love that I have to Thee cannot be satisfied with this earnest of knowledge: wherefore do Thou surrender Thyself completely. It is as if she said more clearly: This thing, O Lord my Spouse, that Thou art giving of Thyself in part to my soul, do Thou now give completely and wholly. And this thing that Thou art showing as in glimpses, do Thou now show completely and clearly. This that Thou art communicating through intermediaries, which is like to communicating Thyself in mockery, do Thou now communicate completely and truly, giving Thyself through Thyself. For at times in Thy visits it seems that Thou art about to give the jewel of the possession of Thyself, and, when my soul regards herself well, she finds herself without it; for Thou hidest it from her, which is as it were to give it in mockery. Surrender Thyself, then, completely, giving Thyself wholly to the whole of my soul, that it wholly may have Thee wholly, and be Thou pleased to send me no other messenger.

**For they cannot tell me what I wish.**

<sup>1</sup> Md adds: 'that is, entire and perfect [knowledge] of God.'



I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love—meaning by the daughters of Jerusalem the creatures.

3. The second is called a sore, which takes firmer hold upon the soul than a wound, and for that reason lasts longer, for it is like a wound which has become a sore, wherewith the soul feels in truth that it goes about sorely wounded<sup>1</sup> by love. And this sore is made in the soul by means of the knowledge of the works of the Incarnation of the Word and mysteries of the faith; which, being greater works of God and comprehending within themselves a greater love than those of the creatures, produce a greater effect of love upon the soul: so that, if the first is as a wound, this second is as a continuous sore. Of this the Spouse in the Songs, addressing the soul, says: 'Thou hast ravished<sup>2</sup> My heart, My sister, thou hast ravished My heart with one of thine eyes, and with one hair of thy neck.'<sup>3</sup> Because the eye here signifies faith in the Incarnation<sup>4</sup> of the Spouse, and the hair signifies the love of the same Incarnation.

4. The third kind of pain in love is like to dying, which is as though the soul had the sore festered. The soul has become wholly festered, and lives while yet dying, until love slays it and so makes it to live the life of love, by transforming it into love. And this dying of love is effected in the soul by means of a touch of highest<sup>5</sup> knowledge of the Divinity, which thing is the 'something' whereof, as is said in this stanza, 'they are stammering.' This touch is neither continuous nor long,<sup>6</sup> for were it so the soul would loose itself from the body; but it passes quickly, and thus the soul remains dying of love, and dies the more seeing<sup>7</sup> that it cannot wholly die of love. This is called impatient love, which is described in Genesis, where the Scripture says that Rachel had such great desire to conceive that she said to her spouse Jacob: *Da mihi liberos, alioquin moriar*.<sup>8</sup> That is: Give me children or else I shall die. And the prophet Job said: *Quis mihi det, ut qui coepit ipse me conterat*?<sup>9</sup> Which is to say: Who will grant me that he that hath begun me, the same shall end me?

<sup>1</sup> [This play upon words reflects the Spanish use of *llagar* (wound) in this paragraph, to correspond to *llaga* (sore), rather than *herir* (wound), as in the last paragraph, where it corresponds to *herida* (wound).]

<sup>2</sup> [The original has the same word *llagar*; see last note.]

<sup>3</sup> Canticles iv, 9. Cf. pp. 115 ff., below.

<sup>4</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'signifies the Incarnation.'

<sup>5</sup> Md: 'loftiest.'

<sup>6</sup> Md: 'nor does it last long.'

<sup>7</sup> Bz, Gr, Lch, Bj: 'dies the more, while it loves, because . . .'

<sup>8</sup> Genesis xxx. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Job vi, 8-9.

5. These twofold pains of love—namely, the sore and the dying—says the soul in this stanza, are caused in her by these rational creatures: the sore, in that place which says that they are relating to her a thousand graces of the Beloved in the mysteries and wisdom of God taught her by the faith; the dying, in that place which says that they are ‘stammering,’ which is the sense and knowledge of the Divinity revealed to the soul<sup>1</sup> in things that she hears said of God. She says, then, thus:

**And all those that serve<sup>2</sup>**

6. She means here, as we have said, by ‘those that serve,’ the rational creatures—angels and men—for these alone among all the creatures serve<sup>3</sup> God with understanding of Him. For that is the meaning of this word (*vagan*) which in Latin is *vacant*. Thus it is as much as to say: ‘all those that serve<sup>4</sup> God.’ Some do this by contemplating Him in Heaven and having fruition of Him, as do the angels; others, by loving and desiring Him upon earth, as do men. And because through these rational creatures the soul knows God more keenly (now by considering their excellence, which is greater than that of all things else created, now by that which they teach us of God: the ones inwardly by secret inspirations, like those of the angels, the others outwardly through the truths of the Scriptures) she says,

**Relate<sup>5</sup> to me a thousand graces of thee,**

7. That is, they reveal to me wondrous things of Thy grace and mercy in the works of Thy Incarnation and truths of faith which they expound to me concerning Thee, and relate to me more and more; for the more they desire to say, the more graces will they be able to reveal concerning Thee.<sup>6</sup>

**And all wound me the more**

8. For the more the angels inspire me and the more men teach me concerning Thee, the more do they make me to be in love with Thee, and thus the more do all wound me with love.

**And something that they are stammering leaves me dying.**

<sup>1</sup> G, V, Br and the Sanlúcar Codex (which the Saint corrects) have ‘concealed’ (from) for ‘revealed’ (to)—an evident slip.

<sup>2</sup> [The Spanish has *vagan* (literally, ‘wander’). The latter word is more appropriate in the poem, but the context of the commentary justifies our translation.]

<sup>3</sup> [*vacan*.]

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>5</sup> [Cf. p. 26, n. 7, above.]

<sup>6</sup> Sanlúcar, G, Vd, Br read: ‘of (or concerning) themselves’ (*de sí*). Gr, Bz omit: ‘concerning Thee.’

9. As if she had said: But beyond the fact that these creatures wound me in the thousand graces which they reveal to me concerning Thee, there is a something which, I feel, still remains to be said; a thing which I know has yet to be revealed; a clearly imprinted trace of God which is revealed to the soul, and which it has to follow; a most lofty understanding of God, which cannot be expressed, and for that reason is called a 'something'; and if the other thing that I understand inflicts upon me the wound and the sore of love, this that I cannot wholly understand, yet feel most deeply, slays me. This happens at times to souls that are already adept, to whom God grants the favour of giving, through that which they hear or see or understand, and sometimes without any of those means, a knowledge, clearly conveyed, wherein it is granted them to understand or to perceive the loftiness and greatness of God; and in this perception the soul experiences such sublime feelings of God that it understands clearly that all has yet to be understood; and that understanding and feeling that the Divinity is so vast that it cannot be perfectly understood is a most lofty understanding. And thus one of the great favours<sup>1</sup> that God grants fleetingly in this life is to give it to understand so clearly and to feel so deeply concerning God that it is able to understand clearly that it cannot understand or feel at all; for in some manner the soul is like those who see Him in Heaven, where those that know Him the best understand the most distinctly the infinitude that they still have to understand, while those that see Him least perceive less clearly than those that see most how much they have yet to see.

10. This, I think, one who has not experienced it will not succeed in understanding; but the soul that experiences it, seeing that it has yet to understand that which it feels so profoundly, calls it a 'something'; for, as it is not understood, so neither can it be expressed—although, as I have said, it can be felt. Wherefore the Bride says that the creatures are<sup>2</sup> stammering to her because they cannot perfectly explain themselves; for that is the meaning of 'stammer'—namely, to talk as do children, and not to convey and express perfectly that which they have to say.

11. Likewise, with respect to the other creatures, there come to the soul certain enlightenments in the manner that we have described (albeit they are not always so lofty) when God grants the soul the

<sup>1</sup> Md: 'greatnesses and favours.'

<sup>2</sup> The Sanlúcar amanuensis wrote 'that they are,' which the Saint emends. He is copied by G, V, Vd and Br.

favour of unfolding to it the knowledge and perception of the spiritual power which is in them. They seem to be expressing grandeurs of God which they are unable to express perfectly, and it is as if they are going to express them, but fall short of making them understood, and thus it is a 'something that they are stammering.' And thus the soul proceeds with her complaint, and in the stanza following addresses her own life, saying:

### STANZA VIII<sup>1</sup>

**But, how, O life,<sup>2</sup> dost thou persevere, Since thou livest not  
where thou livest,  
And since the arrows make thee to die which thou receivest  
From the conceptions of the Beloved which thou formest  
within thee?**

### EXPOSITION

**A**s the soul sees herself to be dying of love, even as she has just said, and sees also that she is not dying wholly, in such a way as to be able to have the fruition of love freely, she makes complaint of the duration of her bodily life, by reason of which her spiritual life is delayed. And thus in this stanza she addresses the very life of her soul, laying stress upon the pain which it causes her. The sense of this stanza is as follows: Life of my soul, how canst thou persevere in this bodily life, since it is death to thee and privation of that true life of thy God, wherein more truly than in the body thou livest in essence, love and desire? And albeit this were no cause for leaving the body of this death in order to live and enjoy the life of thy God, how canst thou still persevere in the body, since the wounds which thou receivest from the love of the grandeurs that are communicated to thee from thy Beloved are alone<sup>3</sup> sufficient to end thy life, together with the wounds of the vehement love caused in thee by that which thou feelest and understandest concerning Him—namely, the touches and wounds that slay with love? The lines continue:

**But how, O life, dost thou persevere, Since thou livest not  
where thou livest?**

2. For the understanding hereof it is to be known that the soul lives

<sup>1</sup> [For the version of this chapter in the Granada group of MSS., see Appendix, pp. 397–8, below.]

<sup>2</sup> See p. 26, n. 8, above. Here Gr, 8,654, Br, Md have: 'O life.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Alone' is added by the Saint and found in G, V, Vd, Br.

in that which it loves rather than in the body which it animates, because it has not its life in the body, but rather gives it to the body, and lives in that which it loves. But beside this life of love, whereby the soul lives in whatsoever it loves, the soul has its natural and radical life in God, as have likewise all created things, according to the saying of Saint Paul: *In ipso vivimus, movemur et sumus*.<sup>1</sup> Which is as much as to say: In God we have our life and our movement and our being. And Saint John says: *Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat*.<sup>2</sup> That is: All that was made was life in God. And as the soul sees that she has her natural life in God, through the being that she has in Him, and likewise her spiritual life, through the love wherewith she loves Him, she complains because she is persevering so long in the life of the body, for this impedes her from truly living where she truly has her life, through essence and through love, as we have said. The insistence that the soul lays upon this is great, for she declares that she is suffering in two contrary ways—namely, in her natural life in the body and in her spiritual life in God, which in themselves are contrary; and since she lives in both she has perforce<sup>3</sup> to suffer great torment, for natural life is to her as death, since it deprives her of the spiritual life wherein she has employed all her being, life and operations through love and affection. And to explain more clearly the rigour of this life, she next says:<sup>4</sup>

**Since the arrows make thee to die which thou receivest**

3. As if she had said: And, apart from what I have said, how canst thou persevere in the body, since the touches of love (for this she means by 'arrows') which the Beloved inflicts upon thy heart suffice alone to deprive thee of thy life? These touches make the soul and the heart so fruitful in understanding and love of God that it may well be said that she has conception of God,<sup>5</sup> according as she says in the words which follow, namely:

**From the conceptions of the Beloved which thou formest within thee?**

4. That is to say, of the beauty, greatness and wisdom and virtues that thou understandest of Him.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii, 28.

<sup>2</sup> St. John i, 4. [The Vulgate, as quoted by the Saint, reads: 'Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil. Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat.' The modern punctuation ('... nihil quod factum est. In ipso vita erat') changes the meaning.]

<sup>3</sup> Br reads 'from without' [*por. fuera*] for 'perforce' [*por. fuerza*].

<sup>4</sup> This sentence is an addition by the Saint, not found in the MSS.

<sup>5</sup> G, V: 'that she receives it of God.'

## STANZA IX

**Since thou hast wounded this heart, Wherefore didst thou not  
heal it?**

**And wherefore, having robbed me of it, hast thou left it thus  
And takest not the prey that thou hast spoiled?**

## EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza the Bride speaks once more with the Beloved, making complaint of her pain; for love that is impatient, such as the soul here reveals, allows itself no rest nor gives any respite to its grief, setting forth its yearnings in every wise until it finds a remedy. And as the soul sees herself wounded and alone, having no healer, nor any other medicine, save her Beloved, Who it was that wounded her, she asks Him why, since He wounded her heart with the love that comes from knowledge of Him, He has not healed her with the vision of His presence. And why (she asks further), since He has robbed her of her heart, through the love wherewith He has enamoured her, drawing her forth from her own power, has He left her thus, namely, drawn forth from her own power (for one that loves possesses his heart no longer, but has given it to the Beloved<sup>1</sup>) and has not placed her truly in His power, taking her to Himself in complete and perfect transformation of love in glory. She says, then:

**Since thou hast wounded this heart, Wherefore didst thou not  
heal it?**

2. She makes not complaint because He has wounded her, for the more deeply the enamoured soul is wounded, the greater is her joy; but because, having wounded her heart, He did not heal it, by slaying it wholly; for so sweet and so delectable are the wounds of love that if they succeed not in slaying they cannot satisfy, but they are so delectable that she would fain have them wound her even till they have wholly slain her, wherefore she says this: 'Since Thou hast wounded this heart, wherefore didst Thou not heal it?' As though she had said: Wherefore, since Thou hast wounded it even to the point of leaving a sore in it, dost Thou not heal it by slaying it outright with love? Since Thou art the cause of its wound in affliction<sup>2</sup> of love, be Thou the

<sup>1</sup> Bz, Gr, Lch, Bj, 8,654, Md omit: 'but has given it to the Beloved.'

<sup>2</sup> The Sanlúcar copyist had 'sickness,' which the Saint emended. Br, Md and the Codices copy 'sickness.'

cause of its health in death of love; for after this manner the heart that is wounded with the pain of Thy<sup>1</sup> absence will be healed with the delight and glory of Thy sweet presence. And she adds:

**And wherefore, having robbed me of it, hast thou left it thus**

3. To rob is naught else than for a robber to dispossess an owner of his possessions and to take possession thereof himself. This plaint, then, the soul sets forth here to the Beloved,<sup>2</sup> enquiring of Him why, since He has robbed her of her heart and taken it out of her power and possession, He has abandoned it thus, without taking it truly into His own possession and keeping it for Himself, as the robber does to the spoils that he has robbed, by carrying them off with him.<sup>3</sup>

4. Wherefore he that has fallen in love is said to have his heart robbed or raped from him<sup>4</sup> by the object of his love, because it wanders far away from him and is set upon the object of his love, and thus he has no heart of his own, for it belongs to the person whom he loves. Wherefore the soul may know well if it loves God or no; for, if it loves Him, it will have no heart for itself, but only for God, for, the more of it it has for itself, the less it has for God.

5. And whether or no the heart has indeed been stolen can be determined by whether it has yearnings for the Beloved, or cares for naught else save for Him, as the soul here declares. The reason is because the heart cannot be in peace and rest without possession,<sup>5</sup> and, when its affections are set, it has possession neither of itself nor of aught beside; and if, furthermore, it possesses not truly that which it loves, it cannot fail to be wearied until it possess it;<sup>6</sup> for until then the soul<sup>7</sup> is like to the empty vessel waiting to be filled, like to the hungry man that desires food, like to the sick man sighing for health, and like to one that is suspended in the air and has no place whereon to find a foothold. In that same case is the heart of one that has fallen in love, and it is this that the soul by experience feels here, saying: 'Wherefore hast

<sup>1</sup> The Saint's correction for 'his.'

<sup>2</sup> 'To the Beloved' is an interlinear addition of the Saint's, found neither in the Codices nor the editions.

<sup>3</sup> The last five words are added by the Saint and copied by G, V, Vd, Br. Gr, Lch, 8,654, Bz, Md are more explicit, reading: '... he has robbed, which would be to take her away from this life.'

<sup>4</sup> [The original has: *robado* ('robbed') o *arrobado* ('enraptured'): the play upon the technical word *arrobado* cannot be reproduced in English.]

<sup>5</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'without its possession.' Bz, Bj, Lch, Gr, 8,654, Md: 'without any possession.'

<sup>6</sup> Gr, Lch, Bj, 8,654, Md read for the last sentence ('and if... possess it'): 'whence it cannot fail to be fatigued until it possess that which it loves.'

<sup>7</sup> The Saint inserts 'the soul,' which is not found elsewhere; all other versions have 'it.'

Thou left it thus?' Which is to say, empty, hungry, lonely, wounded. sick of love, suspended in the air.

**And takest not the prey that thou hast spoiled?**

6. Which is to say: In order to fill it, and satisfy it, and accompany it, and heal it, giving it<sup>1</sup> perfect rest and a perfect abode in Thyself, The loving soul cannot fail to desire the recompense and wages of its love, for the sake of which recompense it serves the Beloved, for otherwise its love would not be true; the which wages and recompense are naught else, nor can the soul desire aught else, than greater love, until it attains to being<sup>2</sup> in perfection of love, which confers no payment save of itself, according as the prophet Job declared in these words, saying: *Sicut servus desiderat umbram, et sicut mercenarius præstolatur finem operis sui, sic et ego habui menses vacuos, et noctes laboriosas ennumeravi mihi. Si dormiero dicam: quando consurgam? et rursum spectabo vesperam et replebor doloribus usque ad tenebras.*<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: As the servant earnestly desireth the shade, and as the hireling looketh for the end of his work, so I also had empty months and counted the nights wearisome and tedious for myself. If I lie down to sleep, I shall say: 'When will come the day when I shall arise?' And then I shall await the evening again, and shall be filled with sorrows till the darkness of night. After this manner the soul that is burning<sup>4</sup> and is enkindled in the love of God desires the fulfilment and perfection of love in order to find complete refreshment there; as the servant wearied with the summer desires the refreshment of the shade, and as the hireling awaits the end of his work, so does the soul await the end of hers. Here it is to be noted that the prophet Job said not that the hireling awaited the end of his labour, but the end of his work, in order to convey the idea that we are expressing—namely, that the soul that loves awaits not the end of its labour, but the end of its work. For its work is to love, and of this work, which is to love, the soul awaits the end and termination, which is the perfection and fulfilment of loving God. Until this comes, the soul is ever in the form described by Job in the passage aforementioned, holding the days and

<sup>1</sup> The Saint adds 'it,' remedying an evident error.

<sup>2</sup> The MSS. are divided between this reading and 'attains and is.' V has: 'until it attains to this perfection.'

<sup>3</sup> Job vii, 2-4. Bz, Bj, Gr, Lch, 8,654 omit the Latin text.

<sup>4</sup> For the archaic verb *estuardo* Bj and Lch read *estribando* [resting, supporting, lying upon—it is translated 'find a foothold,' above] and G, V, Vd, Br *estando*, rendering the phrase: 'the soul that is being enkindled.' The Sanlúcar copyist had written *estaando* [an impossible form], which the Saint corrects.

the months as empty and the nights as wearisome and tedious. In that which has been said it is signified how the soul that loves God must not claim nor hope for aught else from Him save the perfection of love.

## STANZA X

**Quench thou my griefs, Since none suffices to remove them,  
And let mine eyes behold thee, Since thou art their light and  
for thee alone I wish to have them.**

## EXPOSITION

**T**HE soul continues, then,<sup>1</sup> in the present stanza, entreating the Beloved to be pleased now to set an end to her yearnings and afflictions, since there is none other that suffices to do this save only Himself; and she entreats Him to do it in such a way that her eyes may behold Him, since He alone is the light by which they see and she desires to use them for naught else save for Him only. She says:

**Quench thou my griefs,**

2. The concupiscence of love has this one property, as has been said,<sup>2</sup> that all that is not done and said in agreement with that which the will loves wearies, fatigues and grieves it, and makes it fretful, when it sees not the fulfilment of that which it desires; and this, and the weariness which she has to see God, the Bride here calls 'griefs,' to remove which naught else suffices but the possession of the Beloved. Wherefore she entreats Him to quench them with His presence, and to refresh them all, as cool water refreshes one that is wearied with the heat. For this reason she here uses this word 'quench,' to signify that she is suffering from the fire of love.

**Since none suffices to remove them,**

3. In order the better to move and persuade the Beloved to fulfil her petition, the soul says that, since none other than He suffices to satisfy her need, it must be He that shall quench her griefs. Whence it is to be noted that God is very ready to comfort the soul and satisfy

<sup>1</sup> 'Then,' like 'as has been said,' in § 2, below, is the Saint's addition, not found in any other version.

<sup>2</sup> See n. 1, above.

her in her needs and afflictions<sup>1</sup> when she neither has nor seeks to have any other satisfaction and comforts than Himself; and thus the soul that can find pleasure in naught apart from God cannot remain for long without a visitation from the Beloved.

**And let mine eyes behold thee,**

4. That is, let me see Thee face to face with the eyes of my soul.

**Since thou art their light**

5. Leaving aside the fact that God is supernatural light to the eyes of the soul, without which she is in darkness, the soul calls Him here, through her affection, 'light of her eyes,' in the way wherein the lover is wont to call the person whom he loves the 'light of his eyes,' to signify the love which he bears to her. And thus it is as if she had said in the two lines above mentioned: Since mine eyes have no other light, either of their nature or of love, let them behold Thee, for in every way Thou art their light. Of this light David felt the loss when with grief he said: *Lumen oculorum meorum et ipsum non est mecum*.<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: The light of mine eyes, even that is not with me.

**And for thee alone I wish to have them.**

6. In the last line the soul has shown how her eyes will be in darkness if they see not her Beloved, since He alone is their light, wherefore she constrains Him to give her this light of glory. And in the present line she desires to constrain Him yet more, saying that she wishes not to have them for aught else but Himself; for even as that soul is justly deprived of the Divine light who desires to set the eyes of her will on the light of possession of any other thing beside God, since she herself sets a hindrance to receiving it, even so also, in the same way, a soul merits that this be given her, if she closes her eyes aforementioned<sup>3</sup> to all things, to open them to her God only.

<sup>1</sup> Bz, 8,654, Gr, Lch, Bj, Md: 'to comfort and relieve the necessities of the soul. . . .'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xxxvii, 11 [A.V., xxxviii, 10].

<sup>3</sup> Br has a curious version, 'the blessed eyes' [*los dichosos ojos*], for 'her eyes aforementioned' [*los dichos sus ojos*]. [I feel sure that, as P. Silverio hazards, this is a pure error.]

STANZA XI<sup>1</sup>

**O crystalline fount, If on that thy silvered surface<sup>2</sup>  
Thou wouldst of a sudden form the eyes desired Which I bear  
outlined in my inmost parts!<sup>3</sup>**

## EXPOSITION

**A**s with so great a desire the soul desires union with the Spouse, and sees that, in all the creatures, there is no relief, neither any means to that end, she speaks again to faith as to the one who shall give her the most vivid light from her Beloved, considering faith as a means to that end; for indeed there is no other way whereby a soul may come to true union with God, according as the Spouse declares through Osee, saying: 'I will betroth thee to Me in faith.'<sup>4</sup> She says, then, to faith, with great desire: O faith of Christ my Spouse! If thou wouldst but show forth clearly the truths concerning my Beloved which obscurely and darkly thou hast infused into my soul, so that that which thou containest in faith, which is unformed knowledge, thou mightest discover and reveal, withdrawing thyself from it, suddenly, formally and completely, and turning it into a manifestation of glory! The line, then, says:

**O crystalline fount,**

2. She calls faith 'crystalline' for two reasons: the first, because it is from Christ, her Spouse,<sup>5</sup> and the second, because it has the properties of crystal in being pure in its truths, and strong, and clear, free from errors and natural forms. And she calls it 'fount,' because from it<sup>6</sup> there flow to the soul the waters of all spiritual blessings. Hence Christ our Lord, speaking with the Samaritan woman, called faith a fount, saying that in those that believed in Him He would make for Himself a fount whose water should spring up into everlasting life.<sup>7</sup> And this water was the spirit which they that believed on Him should receive in their faith.<sup>8</sup>

**If on that thy silvered surface<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Before this stanza Md inserts that to be found on p. 228, below.

<sup>2</sup> [*semblantes*, a plural, as we say 'features' in the sense of 'face.']

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'entrails' (*entrañas*).]

<sup>4</sup> Osee ii, 20.

<sup>5</sup> [There is a play of words here, upon *cristalina* and *Cristo*.]

<sup>6</sup> Md adds: 'being living.' Cf. the poem on pp. 431-2, below.

<sup>7</sup> St. John iv, 14.

<sup>8</sup> St. John vii, 39.

<sup>9</sup> [See n. 2, above. In sixteenth-century Spanish *semblante* was often used in the plural, as it is here.]

3. The propositions and articles which faith sets before us she calls a silvered surface. For the understanding of this and of the other lines it must be noted that faith is compared to silver with respect to the propositions which it teaches us, and the truths and substance which they contain in themselves are compared to gold; for that same substance which now we believe, clothed and covered with the silver of faith, we shall behold and enjoy in the life to come, fully revealed and<sup>1</sup> with the gold of the faith laid bare. Wherefore David, speaking thereof, says thus: 'If you sleep between the two lots, the feathers of the dove shall be silvered, and the hinder parts of her back shall be of the colour of gold.'<sup>2</sup> He means: If we close the eyes of the understanding to things both above and below (which he calls to 'sleep between') we shall remain alone in faith, which he calls a dove, whose feathers, which are the truths that it tells us, will be silvered, because in this life faith sets them forth to us obscurely and veiled, for which reason the Bride here calls them a silvered surface. But when this faith shall have come to an end, which will be when it is perfected through the clear vision of God, then the substance of the faith<sup>3</sup> will remain, stripped of this veil of silver, and in colour as gold. So that faith gives and communicates to us God Himself, but covered with the silver of faith; but it fails not for that reason to give Him to us in truth, even as one that gives a vessel of silvered gold gives none the less a golden vessel because it is covered with silver. Wherefore, when the Bride in the Songs desired this possession of God, He promised it to her, so far as in this life may be, saying to her that He would make her earrings of gold, but enamelled with silver.<sup>4</sup> In these words He promised to give Himself to her, veiled by faith. The soul, then, now says to faith: 'Oh, if on that thy silvered surface . . .,' by which she means the articles aforementioned, wherewith thou hast covered the gold of the Divine rays, which are the 'eyes desired,' whereof she next speaks, saying:

### **Thou wouldst of a sudden form the eyes desired**

4. By the eyes are meant, as we said, the Divine truths and rays; which, as we have likewise said, are set forth to us by faith in its formless and hidden articles. And thus it is as if she were to say: Oh

<sup>1</sup> The copyist had written 'or,' which the Saint emends to 'and.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxvii, 14 [A.V. lxviii, 13. A.V. interprets differently. Cf. *Spanish Mysticism, a Preliminary Survey*, London, 1924, pp. 77-9, 193-5, for a mystical interpretation of this passage and comments upon it.]

<sup>3</sup> Md adds: 'that is, the truths that she teaches.'

<sup>4</sup> Canticles i, 10.

that Thou wouldst but give me these truths which Thou teachest me formlessly and darkly, and which are veiled in Thy articles of faith, clearly and formally revealed in them, according to the entreaty of my desire! And she calls these truths 'eyes' by reason of the greatness of the presence of the Beloved which she feels, so that it seems to her that she is ever gazing at it. Wherefore she says :

**Which I bear outlined in my inmost parts!**

5. She says that she bears these truths outlined in her inmost parts—that is to say, in her soul, according to the understanding and the will; for according to the understanding she has these truths infused into her soul by faith. And, because her knowledge of them is not perfect, she says that they are outlined: for, even as an outline is not a perfect painting, so the knowledge of faith is not perfect knowledge. Wherefore the truths that are infused into the soul through faith are as it were in outline, and when they are in clear vision they will be in the soul as a perfect and finished painting, according to the words of the Apostle, where he says: *Cum autem venerit quod perfectum est, evacuabitur quod ex parte est.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: When that which is perfect is come (namely, clear vision), then that which is in part (namely, the knowledge of faith) shall be done away.

6. But besides this outline of faith there is another outline in the soul of the lover, which is of love, and this is according to the will; wherein the image of the Beloved is outlined in such manner, and so completely and vividly pictured, when there is union of love, that it is true to say that the Beloved lives in the lover and the lover in the Beloved; and such manner of likeness does love make in the transformation of the two that are in love that it may be said that each is the other and that both are one. The reason for this is that in the union and transformation of love the one gives possession of itself to the other, and each one gives and abandons itself to the other and exchanges itself for the other. Thus each lives in the other, and the one is the other, and both are one through the transformation of love. It is, this that Saint Paul meant when he said: *Vivo autem, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. For in saying, 'I live, yet not I,' he meant that, although he lived, his life was not his own, because he was transformed in Christ and his life was divine rather than human. Wherefore he says that it was not he that lived but Christ that lived in him.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Galatians ii, 20.

7. So that, according to this likeness of transformation, we can say that his life and the life of Christ were one life through union of love, which in Heaven will be perfectly accomplished in the Divine life in all those who shall merit being in God ; for, being transformed in God, they will live the life of God, and not their own life, and yet it will be their own life, for the life of God will be their own life. And then they will say in truth : We live, yet not we, for God liveth in us. This may come to pass in this life, as in the case of Saint Paul—not, however, in a complete and perfect way, although the soul may reach such a transformation of love as the Spiritual Marriage, which is the highest estate that can be attained in this life ; for everything may be called an outline of love by comparison with that perfect image of transformation in glory. But when this outline of transformation is attained in this life, it is a great and good happiness, because the Beloved is greatly pleased with it. For this reason, desiring that the Bride should grave Him upon her soul as an outline, He said to her in the Songs : ‘Set Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm.’<sup>1</sup> The heart here signifies the soul, whereupon God is set in this life as the seal of an outline of faith, even as was said above ; and the arm signifies the strong will, wherein it is as the seal of an outline of love, as we have just now said.

## STANZA XII

**Withdraw them, Beloved, for I fly away.**

**Return thou, dove,**  
**For the wounded hart appears on the hill At the air of thy**  
**flight, and takes refreshment.**

## EXPOSITION

**I**N the great desires and fervent affections of love which the soul has expressed in the preceding stanzas, the Beloved is wont to visit His Bride, in a way most lofty, most delicate and most loving, and with great strength of love. For ordinarily, the favours and visits of God to the soul are wont to be great in proportion to the fervours and yearnings of love which have preceded them. And, as the soul has just now desired these Divine eyes with such great yearning, even as she has just said in the foregoing stanza, the Beloved has revealed to her

<sup>1</sup> Canticles viii, 6.

some rays of His greatness and divinity, as she has desired. These rays were communicated with such loftiness and such power that the soul was made to issue forth from herself in rapture and ecstasy, which at the first is accompanied by great suffering and natural fear. And thus the soul, being unable to suffer excess in so frail a mortal form, says in the present stanza: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.' That is to say: Withdraw these Thy Divine eyes, for they make me to soar aloft, issuing forth from myself in highest contemplation above that which my physical nature can bear. This she says because it seemed to her that her soul was flying out of her body, which is what she desired: for this reason she begged Him to withdraw His eyes—that is, to communicate them no longer to her in the flesh, since in this wise she could neither bear them nor enjoy them as she would desire, but to communicate them to her in the flight which she was about to make from out of the flesh. But this desire and flight the Spouse prevented, saying: Return, dove, for the communication which thou art now receiving from Me belongs not yet to that estate of glory to which thou now aspirest. But return thou to Me, for it is I Whom thou seekest, wounded as thou art by love. And I also, Who am like to the hart wounded by thy love, now begin to reveal Myself to thee in thy lofty contemplation, and take recreation and refreshment in the love of thy contemplation. Wherefore the soul says to the Spouse:

### **Withdraw them, Beloved,**

2. According as we have said, the soul, as befitted the great desires which she had for these Divine eyes, which signify Divinity,<sup>1</sup> received inwardly from the Beloved such communication and knowledge of God, that it compelled her to say: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.' For such is the wretchedness of our physical nature in this life that that which is truest life to the soul and which she desires with such great desire—namely, the communication and knowledge of her Beloved, when they come and are given to her—she cannot receive without its almost costing her<sup>2</sup> her life, so that when those eyes which she sought with so much solicitude and yearning, and by so many ways, are revealed to her, she may come to say: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.'

3. For at times the torture felt in such visits of rapture is so great that there is no torture which so wrenches asunder the bones and

<sup>1</sup> The copyist had written 'dignity,' which the Saint emends. All other authorities read 'Divinity.'

<sup>2</sup> Vd, Br: 'taking away from her'; V, G: 'consuming.'

straitens the physical nature<sup>1</sup>—so much so that unless God provided for the soul its life would come to an end. And in truth, to the soul which experiences it, it seems indeed to be ended, because it feels as though the soul is detached from the flesh and the body is unprotected. The reason for this is that such favours cannot be received by one that is wholly in the flesh, because the spirit is raised up to commune with the Divine Spirit which comes to the soul, and thus it has perforce in some manner to abandon the flesh. And hence it is that the flesh has to suffer,<sup>2</sup> and, consequently, the soul that is in the flesh, through the unity which they have in one being.<sup>3</sup> Wherefore the great torture which the soul feels at the time of this kind of visit, and the great terror which comes to it as it sees itself treated in supernatural wise, cause it to say: ‘Withdraw them, Beloved.’<sup>4</sup>

4. But it is not to be understood that, because the soul entreats Him to withdraw them, she desires their withdrawal; for that saying comes from natural fear, as we have said. Rather, though it should cost her far more, she would not willingly lose these visits and favours of the Beloved, because, although the physical nature suffers therein, the spirit soars to supernatural recollection, in order to have fruition of the Spirit of the Beloved,<sup>5</sup> since it is this that she has desired and entreated. Yet she would not desire to receive it in the flesh, where it is impossible for it to be received perfectly, but only to a slight extent and with difficulty; she would rather receive it in the flight of the spirit<sup>6</sup> from out of the flesh, where she can have fruition of it freely. For this cause she said: ‘Withdraw them, Beloved.’ Which is to say: Cease to communicate them to me in the flesh.

### For I fly away.

5. As though she had said: I fly away from the flesh that Thou mayest communicate them to me apart from it, since they are the cause making me fly from out of it. And that we may the better understand what flight is this, it is to be noted that, as we have said, in that visita-

<sup>1</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: ‘For at times the torture which she receives in such visits of rapture is so great that all the bones seem to be dislocated and the physical nature straitened.’

<sup>2</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: ‘And thus by reason of being abandoned in some manner [by the soul], in its absence, the flesh has to suffer.’

<sup>3</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: ‘through the unity which it has with its union.’

<sup>4</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: ‘And this is the cause of the great grief (*sentimiento*), which is great torture for the flesh; whence it is that she says, and the grief makes her to say: “Withdraw them, Beloved.”’

<sup>5</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: ‘soars to recollection, which is its nature, the which is to have fruition of the Beloved.’

<sup>6</sup> Bj: ‘but in the spirit, in the flight of the spirit.’

tion of the Divine Spirit the spirit of the soul is enraptured with great force, to commune with the Spirit, and abandons<sup>1</sup> the body, and ceases to experience feelings and to have its actions in the body, since it has them in God. For this cause said Saint Paul, with respect to that rapture of his, that he knew not if his soul was receiving it in the body, or out of the body.<sup>2</sup> It is not for this reason to be understood that the soul<sup>3</sup> abandons<sup>4</sup> and forsakes the body of natural life, but that it has not its actions in it. And it is for this reason that in these raptures and flights the body remains without its senses, and, although the greatest pains be inflicted upon it, it feels them not; for this is not like other swoons and trances, which are natural, so that their subjects return to themselves with the first touch of pain. And these feelings are experienced in such visitations by those who have not yet arrived at the estate of perfection, but who are travelling along the road in the estate of progressives; for those who have already attained receive all these communications in peace and gentle love, and these raptures cease, since they were communications preparing the soul for the communication which crowns all.<sup>5</sup>

6. This would be a convenient place for treating of the different kinds of rapture and ecstasy and of other issuings forth and subtle flights of the spirit, which are accustomed to befall spiritual persons. But, since my intent is but to expound these stanzas briefly, as I promised in the prologue, these other things must remain for such as can treat them better than I. And I pass over the subject likewise because the Blessed Teresa of Jesus, our mother, left notes admirably written upon these things of the spirit, the which notes I hope in God will speedily be printed and brought to light. That, then, which the soul says here concerning flight is to be understood of rapture and ecstasy of the spirit in God. And next the Beloved says to her:

### Return thou, dove,

7. Very willingly was the soul leaving the body upon that spiritual flight, thinking that its life was coming to an end, and that it would be able to have fruition of its Spouse for ever and remain with Him unhindered by a veil. But the Spouse prevented its flight, saying: 'Return thou, dove.' As though He had said: O dove, in the quick and lofty

<sup>1</sup> Vd, Bj, Br: 'destroys'; G: 'reveals'; V: 'forsakes.'

<sup>2</sup> [2 Corinthians xii, 2.]

<sup>3</sup> The Saint substitutes 'the soul' for 'it' and is followed by G, V, Vd, Br.

<sup>4</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'destroys.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'preparing for the total communication.']

flight of thy contemplation, and in the love wherewith thou burnest, and the simplicity wherein thou goest (for the dove has these three properties), return thou from this lofty flight wherein thou aspirest to attain to possession of Me in truth, for not yet has the time arrived for such lofty knowledge. And adapt thyself to this lower knowledge that I now communicate to thee in this thy excess.

### **For the wounded hart . . .**

8. The Spouse compares Himself to the hart, for by the hart He here means Himself. It must be known that the characteristic of the hart is to mount up to high places, and when wounded it goes with great haste to seek refreshment in the cool waters; and if it hears its mate complain and perceives that she is wounded it goes straightway to her and fondles and caresses her. Even so does the Spouse now, for, seeing that the Bride is wounded for love of Him, He comes when she sighs, wounded in like manner with love of her, for in those that are in love with each other the wound of one is the wound of both, and the two have one and the same feeling. And thus it is as if He had said: Return thou, My Bride, for if thou goest wounded with love for Me, I also, like the hart, come to thee wounded in this thy wound, Who am as the hart; and I also appear on the heights. For which reason He says:

### **. . . appears on the hill**

9. That is, through the loftiness of thy contemplation which thou hast in this flight. For contemplation is a lofty height, from which in this life God begins to commune with the soul and reveal Himself to it, but not completely. For this reason He says not that He has appeared completely, but that He 'appears,' for, however sublime the degrees of knowledge of God which are given to the soul in this life, they are all as very devious appearances. There follows the third characteristic of the hart, whereof we spoke, which is that contained in the line following:

### **At the air of thy flight, and takes refreshment.**

10. By flight He means contemplation in that ecstasy whereof we have spoken, and by the air He means that spirit of love which this flight of contemplation produces in the soul. And this love which is produced by the flight He here most appropriately calls 'air'; for the Holy Spirit, Who is love, is also compared to air in the Divine Scripture, since He is the breath of the Father and the Son.<sup>1</sup> And, even as

<sup>1</sup> Br by a copyist's error omits 'the Father and.'

there He is the air of the flight—that is, He proceeds from the contemplation and wisdom of the Father and the Son,<sup>1</sup> and is breathed—so here the Spouse calls this love of the soul air, because it proceeds from the contemplation and knowledge which at this time the soul has of God. And it is to be noted that the Spouse says not here that He is coming at the flight, but at the air of the flight, for properly speaking God communicates not Himself to the soul through the flight of the soul—which is, as we have said, the knowledge that it has of God—but through the love which comes from that knowledge; for, even as love is union of the Father and the Son, even so also is it union of the soul with God. Hence it comes that, although a soul have the loftiest<sup>2</sup> knowledge of God, and contemplation, and knowledge of all mysteries, yet if it have not love it profiteth it nothing, as Saint Paul says,<sup>3</sup> towards union with God. For as likewise that same Apostle said: *Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.*<sup>4</sup> That is to say: Have charity, which is the bond of perfection. This charity, then, and love of the soul, brings the Spouse running to drink of this fount of the love of His Bride, even as the fresh water-brooks bring the thirsting and wounded hart to taste their coolness. Wherefore the line continues: 'And takes refreshment.'

11. For even as the air brings coolness and refreshment to him that is fatigued with the heat, so does this air of love refresh and recreate him that burns with the fire of love. For this fire of love has such properties that the air which affords it coolness and refreshment is an increased fire of love; for, in the lover, love is a flame which burns with the desire of burning more, as does the flame of natural fire. Wherefore He here describes as refreshment the fulfilment of this desire of His to burn more in the ardour of love for His Bride, which is the air of her flight. And thus it is as though He said: It burns more at the ardour of thy flight, for one love enkindles another. Here it is to be noted that God sets not His grace and love in the soul save according to the will and love of the soul; for which cause he that is truly in love must see that this love fail not, for by this means, as we have said, it will (if we may so say) move God the more to have more love<sup>5</sup> for the soul and to find more refreshment in it. And, in order to follow after this charity, it must practise that which the Apostle says thereof, where he writes: 'Charity is patient, is kind; envieth not, doeth no evil,

<sup>1</sup> Md adds: 'through the will.'

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 2.

<sup>5</sup> [*a que Dios le tenga más amor.*]

<sup>2</sup> Bj: 'greatest.'

<sup>4</sup> Colossians iii, 14.

is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things which have to be borne; believeth all things (that is, those which ought to be believed); hopeth all things; endureth all things'—namely, those which are in accord with charity.<sup>1</sup>

### STANZAS XIII AND XIV

**My Beloved, the mountains, The solitary, wooded valleys,  
The strange islands, the sonorous rivers, The whisper of the  
amorous breezes,**

**The tranquil night, At the time of the rising of the dawn,  
The silent music, the sounding solitude, The supper that  
recreates and enkindles love.**

#### ANNOTATION

**B**EFORE we enter upon the exposition of these stanzas, it is necessary to explain, for the better intelligence thereof and of the stanzas which follow them, that by this spiritual flight which we have just described is denoted a lofty estate and union of love wherein after much spiritual exercise God is wont to place the soul, which is called spiritual betrothal with the Word, the Son of God. And at the beginning, when this is done for the first time, God communicates to the soul great things concerning Himself, beautifying it with greatness and majesty, decking it with gifts and virtues, and clothing it with knowledge and honour of God, just as if it were a bride on the day of her betrothal. And upon this happy day, not only is there an end of the soul's former vehement yearnings and complaints of love, but, being adorned with the good things which I am describing, she enters into an estate of peace and delight and sweetness of love, as is described in the present stanzas, wherein she does naught else but relate and sing the wonders of her Beloved, which she knows and enjoys in Him, by means of the aforementioned union of the betrothal. And thus, in the remainder of the stanzas following, she speaks not of pains or yearnings as she did aforetime, but of the communication and exercise of sweet and peaceful love with her Beloved, since in this estate all those other things are now ended. And it is to be noted that in these two stanzas is

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 4-6.

contained the most that God is wont to communicate to a soul at this time. But it is not to be understood that to all such as arrive at this estate He communicates all that is expounded in these two stanzas, nor that He does so according to one single way and degree of knowledge and feeling. For to some souls He gives more and to others less; to some after one manner and to others after another; though souls belonging to either category can be in this estate of the Spiritual Betrothal. But we set down here the highest that is possible because in this is comprehended all else. And the exposition follows.

### EXPOSITION OF THE TWO STANZAS

2. Now as this little dove, which is the soul, was flying on the breezes of love above the waters of the flood (namely, those her fatigues and yearnings of love which she has described<sup>1</sup> up to this point) and found no rest for her foot,<sup>2</sup> upon this last flight which we have described, the compassionate father Noe put forth the hand of his mercy and caught her, and brought her into the ark of his charity and love, and this was at the time when, in the stanza that we have just expounded, the Spouse said: 'Return thou, dove.'

3. And it is to be noted that, even as in the ark of Noe, as the Divine Scripture tells us, there were many mansions for many different kinds<sup>3</sup> of animal, and every kind of food which they could eat, even so, in this flight which it makes to this Divine Ark of the bosom of God, the soul not only sees therein the many mansions which His Majesty described in Saint John,<sup>4</sup> saying that they were in His Father's house, but sees and knows that all kinds of food are there<sup>5</sup>—that is, all the grandeurs which can please the soul, which are all the things that are contained in the two stanzas above-mentioned, and are signified by those words used in common parlance, the substance of which is as follows.

4. In this Divine union the soul sees and tastes abundance and inestimable riches, finds all the rest and the recreation that it desires, and understands strange kinds of knowledge and secrets of God, which is another of those kinds of food that it likes best. It feels likewise in God an awful power and strength which transcends all other power and

<sup>1</sup> V, Vd, Br: 'which we have treated.'

<sup>2</sup> Gr, Lch, 8,654, Md add: 'even as the dove that flew out of the ark.'

<sup>3</sup> Gr, Lch, 8,654, Md: 'for every different kind.'

<sup>4</sup> St. John xiv, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Br omits: 'and knows that all kinds of food are there.'

strength: it tastes a marvellous sweetness and spiritual delight, finds true rest and Divine light and has lofty experience of the knowledge of God, which shines forth in the harmony of the creatures and the acts of God. Likewise it feels itself to be full of good things, and empty of evil things and far withdrawn from them; and, above all, it experiences, and has fruition of, an inestimable feast of love, which confirms it in love, and this is the substance of that which is contained in the two stanzas aforementioned.

5. In these stanzas the Bride says that her Beloved is all these things, both in Himself and also for her;<sup>1</sup> for in that which God is wont to communicate in such excesses, the soul feels and knows the truth of that saying which the holy Francis uttered, namely: 'God mine, and all things.' Wherefore, since God is all things to the soul, and the good of them all, the communication of this excess is explained by the similitude of the goodness of the things<sup>2</sup> in the said stanzas, which we shall expound line by line. It must be understood that all that is expounded here is in God in an eminent and an infinite manner, or, to express it better, that each of these grandeurs which are spoken of is God, and they are all of them God; for, inasmuch as in this case the soul is united with God, it feels that all things are God in one simple being, even as Saint John felt when he said: *Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat.*<sup>3</sup> That is to say: That which was made in Him was life. It is not to be understood that, in that which the soul is here said to feel, it is, as it were, seeing things in the light, or creatures in God, but that in that possession the soul feels that all things are God to it. Neither is it to be understood that, because the soul has such lofty feelings concerning God in that which we are saying, it sees God essentially and clearly, for this is no more than a powerful and abundant communication, and a glimpse of that which He is in Himself, wherein the soul feels this goodness concerning the things which we shall expound in these lines, as follows:

### **My Beloved, the mountains,**

6. The mountains have heights; they are abundant, extensive, beautiful, graceful, flowery and fragrant. These mountains my Beloved is to me.<sup>4</sup>

### **The solitary, wooded valleys,**

<sup>1</sup> A corrupt reading has: 'and she awaits Him' [*y lo espera ella* for *y lo es para ella*]. Bj reads: 'and awaits her there' [*y la espera allá*]. Our reading is the Saint's correction.

<sup>2</sup> Bj, Bz: 'this excess of the abundance of things.'

<sup>3</sup> [See p. 57, n. 2, above.]

<sup>4</sup> G omits this paragraph.

7. The solitary valleys are quiet, pleasant, cool, shady, abounding in fresh water; and with the variety of their groves and the sweet song of the birds they greatly recreate and delight the senses, in their solitude and silence giving refreshment and rest. These valleys my Beloved is to me.

### **The strange islands,**

8. The strange islands are girt around by the sea, and are far away over the sea, withdrawn and aloof from communication with men. Thus there are produced and bred in them things very different from those in our own experience, of very strange kinds and with virtues never seen by men, so that they cause great surprise and wonder in those that see them. And thus, by reason of the great and marvellous wonders, and the strange knowledge, far removed from the knowledge of every day, that the soul sees in God, He is here called strange islands. There are two reasons for calling a man strange: either because he lives in retirement from men or because he is excellent and singular among other men in his deeds and works. For both these reasons the soul here speaks of God as strange; for not only has He all the strangeness of islands which have never been seen, but likewise His ways, counsels and works are very strange and new and marvellous to men.<sup>1</sup> And it is no marvel if God is strange to men who have never seen Him, since He is strange also to the holy angels and the souls<sup>2</sup> who see Him; for they cannot see Him perfectly, nor shall they so see Him, and until the last day of judgment they will continually be seeing in Him so many things that are new, according to His profound judgments, and concerning the works of His mercy and justice, that they will wonder continually and marvel ever more: so that not men alone, but likewise angels, can speak of Him as of strange islands.<sup>3</sup> Only to Himself is He not strange, neither to Himself is He new.

### **The sonorous rivers,<sup>4</sup>**

9. Rivers have three properties: the first is that they assail and submerge all that they meet: the second, that they fill up all the low and

<sup>1</sup> Bz, 8,654, Gr, Lch, Bj, Md: 'And thus [the soul] speaks of God as strange, for both these reasons; because He has all the strangeness of islands which have never been seen, and because His ways and counsels are marvellous wonders.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz, Bj, Lch, Gr, 8,654, Md omit: 'and the souls.'

<sup>3</sup> Md: 'will ever know in Him so many things that are new according to the works of mercy and justice that they ever marvel; so that all, both angels and men, can speak of Him as of strange islands.'

<sup>4</sup> [For the version of §§ 9-11 in the Granada group of MSS. see Appendix I, pp. 398-400, below.]

hollow places that are in their path: the third, that their sound is such as to drown and take the place of all sounds else. And because in this communication of God which we are describing the soul feels most delectably in herself these three properties, she says that her Beloved is the sonorous rivers. With respect to the first property that the soul feels, it must be known that she feels herself to be assailed by the torrent<sup>1</sup> of the Spirit of God in this case, in such a manner, and taken possession of thereby with such force, that it seems to her that all the rivers of the world are coming upon her and assailing her, and she feels that all her actions<sup>2</sup> are whelmed thereby, and all the passions which she had aforetime. Yet, though this is an experience of such violence, it is not for that reason an experience of torment; for these rivers are rivers of peace, even as God declares through Isaias concerning this assault upon the soul,<sup>3</sup> saying: *Ecce ego declinabo super eam quasi fluvium pacis et quasi torrentem inundantem gloriam.*<sup>4</sup> Which is to say: Take note and be warned that I will come down upon her (that is to say, upon the soul) and assail her like a river of peace and like a torrent which overflows with glory as it advances. And thus this Divine assault which God makes upon the soul, resembling the assault of sonorous rivers, fills it wholly with peace and glory. The second property which the soul feels is that this Divine water at this time fills up the low places<sup>5</sup> of its humility and also fills the empty places of its desires, even as Saint Luke says: *Exaltavit humiles, exurientes implevit bonis.*<sup>6</sup> Which is to say: He hath exalted the humble and hath filled the hungry with good things. The third property that the soul feels in the sonorous rivers of its Beloved is a spiritual voice and sound which is above all sounds and above all voices, the which voice drowns every other voice and its sound exceeds all the sounds in the world. And in the exposition hereof we shall have to occupy ourselves for some little space.

10. This voice or sonorous sound of these rivers which the soul here describes is a fulfilment so abundant that it fills the soul with good things, and a power so powerful that it possesses the soul and appears to her not merely as the sound of rivers, but as most powerful thunderings. But this voice is a spiritual voice and is unaccompanied by those

<sup>1</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'by the current.'

<sup>2</sup> G, V, Br: 'all her occasions'—clearly an error.

<sup>3</sup> Both the Sanlúcar copyist and all the other MSS. read: 'saying concerning this assault upon the soul.' The correction is the Saint's.

<sup>4</sup> Isaias lxvi, 12.

<sup>5</sup> *bajos*. Br has *vasos* ('vessels').

<sup>6</sup> St. Luke i, 52-3.

physical sounds, and by the pain and trouble of them, but is accompanied rather by grandeur, strength, power, delight and glory; and thus it is as an immense and inward sound and voice, which clothes the soul with power and strength. This spiritual voice and sound was heard in the spirits of the Apostles at the time when the Holy Spirit, in a vehement torrent (as is said in the Acts of the Apostles), descended upon them;<sup>1</sup> when, in order that the spiritual voice that was speaking to them from within might be made manifest, this sound was heard from without as a vehement wind, in such wise that it was heard by all who were in Jerusalem: whereby, as we say, was denoted that which the Apostles received within themselves, which was, as we have said, a fulfilment of power and strength. And likewise, when the Lord Jesus was praying to the Father in the peril and anguish which were caused Him by His enemies, as is said in Saint John, there came to Him an inward voice from Heaven, strengthening Him according to His humanity, which sound the Jews heard from without, and so solemn was it, and so mighty, that some said it had thundered, and others, that an angel from Heaven had spoken to Him;<sup>2</sup> and by that voice which was heard from without was denoted and signified the strength and power given to Christ, according to His humanity, within. By this it is not to be understood that the soul fails to receive in the spirit the sound of the spiritual voice. It must be noted that the spiritual voice is the effect which the voice makes upon the soul, even as the physical voice impresses its sound upon the ear and its intelligence upon the spirit. This was in the mind of David when he said: *Ecce dabit voci suæ vocem virtutis*.<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: Behold, God will give<sup>4</sup> to His voice a voice of virtue, the which virtue is the voice within. When David said that He would give His voice a voice of virtue he meant that to the outward voice, which is heard in outward wise, He would give a voice of such virtue that it would be heard within. By this it must be understood that God is an infinite voice, and that, communicating Himself to the soul after the said manner, He produces the effect of an immense voice.<sup>5</sup>

11. This voice Saint John heard in the Apocalypse, and he says of the voice that he heard from Heaven: *Erat tanquam vocem aquarum multarum, et tanquam vocem tonitruu magni*.<sup>6</sup> Which is to say: That the voice which he heard was as a voice of many waters and as the voice of

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii, 2.

<sup>2</sup> St. John xii, 28.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxxvii, 34 [A.V., Psalm lxxviii, 33]. <sup>4</sup> G, V, Vd, Br read 'He' for 'Behold, God.'

<sup>5</sup> G, V, Vd, Br read: [for 'He . . . voice'], 'the immense voice produces an effect upon it.' So also reads the Sanlúcar copy; the reading in the text above is the Saint's correction.

<sup>6</sup> Apocalypse xiv, 2.

a great thunder. And that it may not be inferred that this voice, because it was so great, was harsh and disagreeable, he adds at once that this same voice was so soft that *erat sicut citharedorum citharizantium in citharis suis*. Which signifies: It was as of many harpers who harped upon their harps. And Ezechiel says that this sound as of many waters was *quasi sonum sublimis Dei*,<sup>1</sup> which is to say, as a sound of the Most High God. That is, that He communicated Himself therein after a manner most high and likewise most gentle. This voice is infinite, for, as we said, it is God Himself Who communicates Himself, speaking in the soul: but He limits Himself by the capacity of each soul, uttering a voice of virtue such as befits its limitations; and He produces in the soul great delight and grandeur. For this cause the Bride said in the Songs: *Sonet vox tua in auribus meis, vox enim tua dulcis*.<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: Let Thy voice sound in my ears, for Thy voice is sweet. The line continues:

### **The whisper of the amorous breezes,**

12. Of two things the soul makes mention in this present line, namely, of breezes and of a whisper. By the amorous breezes are here understood the virtues and graces of the Beloved, which, by means of the said union of the Spouse, assail the soul, communicate themselves most lovingly and touch it in its substance.<sup>3</sup> And by the whisper of these breezes is meant a most lofty and most delectable knowledge of God, and of His virtues, which overflows into the understanding at the touch which these virtues of God effect in the substance of the soul:<sup>4</sup> and this is the supreme delight which is contained in all things that the soul here experiences.<sup>5</sup>

13. And in order that what has been said may be the better understood, it must be noted that even as two things are perceived in the air—namely, the touch thereof and the sound or whisper—so in this communication of the Spouse two other things are perceived—namely, feeling of delight, and knowledge. And even as the touch of the air is felt with the sense of touch and the whisper of the same air is heard by the ear, even so likewise the touch of the virtues of the Beloved is felt and enjoyed in the sense of touch of this soul which is in its substance;<sup>6</sup> and the knowledge of these virtues of God is felt in the ear of the soul,

<sup>1</sup> Ezechiel i, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Canticles ii, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Md adds: 'by means of loving knowledge.'

<sup>4</sup> The Saint corrects: 'in the ascent of the soul' (which is also found in Bz) to 'in the substance of the soul.' Md adds: 'by means of its faculties.'

<sup>5</sup> 'Here' is an addition of the Saint, copied only by G, V, Vd, Br.

<sup>6</sup> Md adds: 'by means of the will.'

which is in the understanding. And it must be known likewise that the amorous breeze is said to have come when it strikes delectably, satisfying the appetite of him that so greatly desired this refreshment, for then the sense of touch is soothed and refreshed, and with this soothing of the sense of touch the ear experiences great delight in the sound and whisper of the air, much more than does the sense of touch in the touch of the air; for the sense of hearing is more spiritual (or, to speak more exactly, comes nearer to the spiritual) than the sense of touch; wherefore the delight which it causes is more spiritual than that which is caused by the sense of touch.

14. Precisely because this touch of God brings great satisfaction and comfort to the substance of the soul, and sweetly fulfils its desire, which was to be in this union, the said union, or touch, is spoken of as 'amorous breezes'; for, as we have said, in it are communicated to the soul, lovingly and sweetly, the virtues of the Beloved, whence is derived in the understanding the whisper of knowledge. And it is called a whisper, because even as the whisper which is caused by the air enters subtly into the organ of hearing, even so this most subtle and delicate knowledge enters with marvellous sweetness and delight into the inmost substance of the soul, which is a far greater delight than any other. The reason is that substance of understanding is given to it, stripped<sup>1</sup> of accidents<sup>2</sup> and imaginary forms, for it is given<sup>3</sup> to the understanding that is called by philosophers 'passive' or 'possible,' because it receives it passively, doing naught on its own behalf;<sup>4</sup> which is the principal delight of the soul, because it is in the understanding, wherein, as theologians say, consists fruition, which is to see God.<sup>5</sup> Since this whisper signifies the said substantial knowledge, some theologians think that our father Elias saw God in that gentle whisper of the breeze which he felt on the mount at the mouth of his cave. The Scripture calls it a gentle whisper of the breeze, because from the subtle and delicate communication of the Spirit knowledge was born to it in the understanding; and the soul here calls it a whisper of amorous breezes, because from the amorous communication of the virtues of her Beloved it overflows into her understanding, wherefore she calls it a 'whisper of the amorous breezes.'

<sup>1</sup> G, V, Vd, Br omit part of this and the last sentence, reading: 'into the inmost substance of the soul, stripped of all accidents and imaginary forms.'

<sup>2</sup> Md: 'of other accidents.'

<sup>3</sup> The Saint thus corrects the 'which it gives' of the copy.

<sup>4</sup> Md: 'naught after its natural manner on its own behalf.'

<sup>5</sup> Md: 'which is the principal act of the soul; because it is in the understanding, wherein consists, as theologians say, the vision of God.'

15. This Divine whisper, which enters by the ear of the soul, is not only substance which I have called that of understanding, but likewise it is the manifestation of truths concerning the Divinity and the revelation of His hidden secrets; for ordinarily, whensoever some communication of God is found in the Divine Scriptures, and is said to enter by the ear, it is found to be a manifestation of these naked truths in the understanding, or a revelation of secrets of God, which are purely spiritual visions or revelations, given to the soul alone, without the help and aid of the senses, and so, when it is said that God communicates by the ear, that expression describes a very sublime and certain fact. Thus, when Saint Paul wished to describe the loftiness of his revelation, he said not, *Vidit arcana verba*, still less, *Gustavit arcana verba*, but *Audivit arcana verba, quæ non licet homini loqui*.<sup>1</sup> Which is as though he had said: I heard secret words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. As to this, it is thought that he saw God, as did our father Elias, in that whisper. For even as faith, as Saint Paul says likewise, comes by bodily hearing, even so that which faith teaches us, which is the substance of understanding, comes by spiritual hearing. This was clearly expressed by the prophet Job, when he spoke with God, Who had revealed Himself to him, saying: *Auditu auris audiivi te*,<sup>2</sup> *nunc autem oculus meus videt te*.<sup>3</sup> That is to say: With the hearing of the ear I heard Thee, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherein it is clearly declared that to hear Him with the ear of the soul is to see Him with the eye of passive understanding whereof we spoke. Wherefore he says not: I heard Thee with the hearing 'of my ears,' but 'of my ear'; nor: I saw Thee 'with mine eyes,' but 'with mine eye,' which is the understanding. Wherefore this hearing of the soul is seeing with the understanding.<sup>4</sup>

16. And it is not to be understood that, because this which the soul understands is naked substance, as we have said, it is perfect and clear fruition,<sup>5</sup> as in Heaven; for, although it is free from accidents, it is not for that reason clear, but rather it is dark, for it is contemplation, which, as Saint Dionysius says, is in this life a ray of darkness; wherefore we can say that it is a ray and image of fruition, inasmuch as it is in the understanding, wherein consists fruition.<sup>6</sup> This substance of under-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 4.

<sup>2</sup> The Saint's emendation for the copyist's *audivit*.

<sup>3</sup> Job xlii, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Lch paraphrases: 'This, therefore, that the soul understands is . . .'

<sup>5</sup> Md: 'vision.'

<sup>6</sup> Md: 'wherein consists the said vision.'

standing, which the soul here calls a whisper, is the 'desired eyes,' whereof the soul said, when the Beloved revealed them to her, because she could not bear the perception of them: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.'

17. And, as I think that in this place a passage in Job is very much to the point, as confirming a great part of that which I have said of this rapture and betrothal, I will relate it here (although it may delay us a little longer) and I will expound the parts of it that are to our purpose. And first I will give it wholly in Latin, and then wholly in the vulgar tongue, and afterwards I will briefly expound that part of it which concerns our purpose; and having ended this I will continue the exposition of the lines of the next stanza. Eliphaz the Themanite, then, in the Book of Job, speaks after this manner: *Porro ad me dictum est verbum absconditum, et quasi furtive suscepit auris mea venas susurri eius, In horrore visionis nocturnæ, quando solet sopor occupare homines, pavor tenuit me, et tremor, et omnia ossa mea perterrita sunt: et cum spiritus me præsente, transiret, inhorruerunt pili carnis meæ: stetit quidam, cujus non agnoscebam vultum, imago coram oculis meis, et vocem quasi auræ lenis audiui.*<sup>1</sup> Which in the vulgar tongue signifies: In truth a hidden word was spoken to me; and mine ear received as it were by stealth the veins of its whisper. In the horror of the vision<sup>2</sup> by night, when sleep is wont to occupy men, I was occupied by fear and trembling, and all my bones shook; and, as the spirit passed before my presence, the skin<sup>3</sup> of my flesh shrank; and there came before me One Whose countenance I knew not, an image before mine eyes, and I heard a voice of a gentle breeze. In this passage is contained almost all that we have here said concerning this rapture, from the twelfth stanza, which says: 'Withdraw them, Beloved,' down to this point. For in that which Eliphaz the Themanite says, namely, that a hidden word was spoken to him, is signified that hidden thing which was given to the soul, the greatness whereof it could not suffer, so that it said: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.'

18. In this saying that his ear received, as it were by stealth, the veins of its whisper, is signified the naked substance which, as we have said, is received by the understanding: for veins here denote inward substance, and the whisper signifies that communication and touch of the virtues from which the said substance of understanding is communicated to the understanding. And the soul here calls it a whisper, because such a communication is very gentle, even as in that other place she calls

<sup>1</sup> Job iv, 12-16.

<sup>2</sup> Vd, Br have 'visitation' erroneously.

<sup>3</sup> Md has: 'the hair' [cf. Job iv, 15, A.V.].

it 'amorous breezes,' because it communicates itself amorously. He says that he received it as it were by stealth, because even as that which is stolen belongs to another, even so that secret did not belong to man, speaking after the manner of nature: for he received that which was not according to his nature, wherefore it was not lawful for him to receive it, as it was not lawful for Saint Paul to repeat that which he had heard. Wherefore the other Prophet said twice: 'My secret to myself.'<sup>1</sup> And when Eliphaz speaks of the horror of the vision by night, when sleep is wont to occupy man, and says that he himself has been occupied by fear and trembling, he refers to the fear and trembling which is caused naturally in the soul by that communication of rapture which we said human nature could not suffer in the communication of the Spirit of God. For this Prophet declares here that, as at the time when men go to rest they are wont to be oppressed and terrified by a vision which they call a nightmare, which comes to them between sleep and waking—that is, at the point when sleep begins—even so at the time of this spiritual transit from the sleep of natural ignorance to the waking of supernatural knowledge, which is the beginning of rapture or ecstasy, the spiritual vision which is then communicated to them fills them with fear and trembling.

19. And he adds further that all his bones were terrified, or shaken. Which is as though he had said that they were moved and dislocated from out of their places; wherein is described the great dislocation of the bones which, as we have said, is suffered at this time. This was clearly expressed by Daniel, when he saw the angel, and said: *Domine, in visione tua dissolutæ sunt compages meæ*.<sup>2</sup> That is: Lord, in Thy vision the joints of my bones have become loosed.<sup>3</sup> And in that which he then says, which is: 'And as the spirit passed before my presence'—that is to say, when He made my spirit pass beyond its limits and natural ways by means of the rapture whereof we have spoken—'the skin of my flesh shrank,' he describes that which we have said concerning the body, which in this transit is frozen so that the flesh shrinks like that of a dead man.

20. The passage continues: 'There was One Whose countenance I knew not, an image before mine eyes.' This One Who he says was present was God, Who communicated Himself after the manner aforementioned. And he says that he knew not His countenance, in order to indicate that in this communication and vision, most lofty though it be,

<sup>1</sup> Isaías xxiv, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel x, 16.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'have opened'].

the face and the Essence<sup>1</sup> of God are neither known nor seen. But he says that it was an image before his eyes: for, as we have said, that knowledge of the hidden word was most sublime, as it were the image and trace of God, but it is not to be understood that such knowledge is the essential vision of God.

21. The passage then concludes, saying: 'And I heard a voice of a gentle breeze.' By this is understood the whisper of the amorous breezes, to which the soul here likens her Beloved. It is not to be understood that these visits are always accompanied by these natural distresses and fears, which, as has been said, are the lot of those that are beginning to enter the estate of illumination and perfection, and to experience this kind of communication; for in others these things are accompanied rather by great sweetness. The exposition continues:

### The tranquil night,

22. In this spiritual sleep which the soul has in the bosom of its Beloved, it possesses and enjoys all the calm and rest and quiet of the peaceful night, and it receives in God, together with this, a profound and dark Divine intelligence. For this reason the Bride says that her Beloved is to her 'the tranquil night'

### At the time of the rising<sup>2</sup> of the dawn,

23. But this tranquil night, she says, is not as the dark night, but as the night which is already near the rising of the morning:<sup>3</sup> for this calm and quiet in God is not complete darkness to the soul, as is the dark night, but it is tranquillity and quiet in the Divine light, in a new knowledge of God, wherein the spirit is most gently tranquil, being raised to the Divine light. And here she very fitly calls this Divine light the rising of the dawn, which means the morning; for, even as the rising of the morning dispels the darkness of the night and reveals the light of the day, even so this spirit that is tranquil and quiet in God is raised from the darkness of natural knowledge to the morning light of the supernatural knowledge of God—not brightly, but, as we say, darkly, like the night at the time of the rising of the dawn; for, even as the night at the time of such rising is neither wholly night nor wholly day, but, as men say, 'between two lights,'<sup>4</sup> so this Divine tranquillity and solitude is neither informed with the Divine light

<sup>1</sup> Lch: 'presence.'

<sup>2</sup> [The Spanish word (*levantar*) is plural here and throughout the paragraph following.]

<sup>3</sup> G, V, Vd, 8, 654, Br: 'the rising of the dawn.'

<sup>4</sup> [This phrase (*entre dos luces*) is the current Spanish equivalent of 'twilight.']

in all its clearness nor does it fail in some measure to participate thereof.

24. In this tranquillity the understanding sees itself raised up in a new and strange way, above all natural understanding, to the Divine light, much as one who, after a long sleep, opens his eyes to the light which he was not expecting. This knowledge, as I understand, was indicated by David when he said: *Vigilavi et factus sum sicut passer solitarius in tecto*.<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: I awakened and became like to the sparrow<sup>2</sup> all alone on the house-top. As though he had said: I opened the eyes of my understanding and found myself above all kinds of natural knowledge, all alone, without them, upon the house-top—that is, above all things here below. And he says here that he became like to the sparrow that is all alone, because in this manner of contemplation the spirit has the properties of this sparrow, which are five. First, it ordinarily perches upon the highest places, even as the spirit, in this experience, engages in the highest contemplation. Second, it ever keeps its beak turned towards the direction of the wind, even as the spirit here turns the beak of its affection towards the direction whence comes to it the spirit of love, which is God. Third, it is ordinarily alone and will have no other bird whatsoever near to it, so that, when any other perches beside it, it flies away. Even so the spirit in this contemplation is withdrawn from all things, detached from them all and consenting to naught save solitude in God. The fourth property is that it sings very sweetly: even so does the spirit sing to God at this time, for the praises which it makes to God are of sweetest love, most delectable to itself and most precious to God.<sup>3</sup> The fifth is that it is of no definite colour; even so is the perfect spirit, which in this excess not only has no colour of sensual affection and love of self, but has not even any particular consideration of things above or below,<sup>4</sup> neither can it speak thereof in any method or manner, for that which possesses it is the fathomless knowledge of God, even as we have said.

### The silent music,

25. In that aforesaid tranquillity and silence of the night, and in that knowledge of the Divine light, the soul is able to see a marvellous

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cī, 8 [A.V., cii, 7].

<sup>2</sup> The Spanish translation of *passer* throughout is 'bird' [*pájaro*, the etymological descendant of *passer*].

<sup>3</sup> Br: 'most delectable to itself, and most precious to itself, and most precious to God.'

<sup>4</sup> Md: 'consideration of things below, or at times of things above.'

fitness and disposition of Wisdom<sup>1</sup> in the diversities of all its creatures and works, all and each of which are endowed with a certain response<sup>2</sup> to God, whereby each after its manner testifies to that which God is in it, so that it seems to hear a harmony of sublimest music surpassing all the concerts and melodies of the world. The Bride calls this music silent because, as we have said, it is a tranquil and quiet intelligence, without sound of voices; and in it are thus enjoyed both the sweetness of the music and the quiet of the silence. And so she says that her Beloved is this silent music, because this harmony of spiritual music is known and experienced in Him. Not only so, but likewise He is

### The sounding solitude,

26. This is almost the same as silent music; for, although that music is silent to the senses and the natural faculties, it is a most sounding solitude to the spiritual faculties; for when these are alone and empty of all natural forms and apprehensions they can readily receive the spiritual sound most sonorously in the spirit of the excellence of God, in Himself and in His creatures, according to that which, as we said above, Saint John saw in spirit in the Apocalypse—namely, when he heard the voice of many harpers who harped upon their harps.<sup>3</sup> This was in the spirit: he speaks not of material harps,<sup>4</sup> but of a certain knowledge which he had of the praises of the blessed, which each one, according to his own degree of glory, makes to God continually. And this is like music, for, as each one possesses the gifts of God in a different degree, even so does each one sing the praises of God in a different degree, yet all make one harmony of love, just as in music.

27. After this same manner the soul is able to see, in that tranquil wisdom, how of all the creatures—not the higher creatures alone, but also the lower, according to that which each of them has received in itself from God—each one raises its voice in testimony to that which God is. She sees that each one after its manner exalts God, since it has God in itself according to its capacity; and thus all these voices make one voice of music, extolling the greatness of God and His marvellous knowledge and wisdom. And it is this that the Holy Spirit signifies in the Book of Wisdom, where He says: *Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum, et hoc quod continet omnia, scientiam habet vocis.*<sup>5</sup> Which is to say: The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the round world, and this world,

<sup>1</sup> Bj, Bz, Gr, Lch, 8,654, Md: 'of the wisdom of God.'

<sup>2</sup> G, V, Md: 'correspondence.'

<sup>3</sup> [See p. 78, §11, above.]

<sup>4</sup> Lch: 'of natural harps.'

<sup>5</sup> Wisdom i, 7.

which containeth all things that He hath made, hath knowledge<sup>1</sup> of the voice. This is that sounding solitude which, as we say, the soul knows here,<sup>2</sup> which is the testimony that all things give in themselves concerning God. And inasmuch as the soul receives this sounding music, not without solitude and withdrawal from all outward things, she calls them the silent music and the sounding solitude. This, she says, is her Beloved; and He is further

**The supper that recreates and enkindles love.**

28. To those that are loved suppers bring recreation, satisfaction and love. And because these three things are caused<sup>3</sup> by the Beloved in the soul in this sweet communication, the Bride here calls Him the supper that recreates and enkindles love. It is to be known that in Divine Scripture this word 'supper' is understood of the Divine vision; for, as supper is the end of the day's work and the beginning of the night's rest, so this knowledge which we have called tranquil gives to the soul a realization of the sure termination of things evil and the possession of things that are good, whereat it is more enkindled with love for God than it was before. Wherefore God is to the soul the supper which recreates it by being the termination of its evils, and enkindles it in love by being to it the possession of all things that are good.

STANZA XV

**Our flowery bed, Encompassed with dens of lions,  
Hung with purple and builded in peace, Crowned with a  
thousand shields of gold.**

EXPOSITION

**I**N the last two stanzas the Bride has sung of the graces and wonders of her Beloved, and in this stanza she sings of the happy and high estate wherein she sees herself set, and of its security, and of the riches of the gifts and virtues wherewith she sees herself endowed and adorned, in the nuptial chamber of union with her Spouse. She says

<sup>1</sup> Lch: 'necessity.'

<sup>2</sup> The word 'here,' an addition of the Saint, is found also in G, V, Vd, Br.

<sup>3</sup> The copy had: 'And because this [supper] is caused.' The Saint emended it as shown in the text above. Bj, Bz, Lch, Md read: 'And because this [thing] is caused'; the remaining versions as in the text.

that she is already one with the Beloved, that she has the strong virtues, and charity in perfection, and perfect peace, and that she is wholly enriched and beautified with gifts and beauty, such as it is possible to possess and enjoy in this life. Thus she says:

### Our flowery bed,

2. This flowery bed is the bosom and love of the Beloved, wherein the soul, that has become the Bride, is now united; the which bed is flowery for her by reason of the union and bond which has now been made between the two, by means whereof are communicated to her the virtues, graces and gifts of the Beloved. With these she is so greatly beautified, and is so rich and so full of delights, that she thinks herself to be upon a bed made of a variety of sweet flowers, which delight her as she touches them and refresh her with their fragrance; for the which cause she calls this union of love a flowery bed. So the Bride calls it in the Songs, where she says to the Beloved: *Lectulus noster floridus*;¹ that is: Our flowery bed. She calls it 'ours,' because the same virtues and the same love (namely, those of the Beloved) are common to both, and the same delight is common to both, even as the Holy Spirit says in the Proverbs, in these words: 'My delights are with the sons of men.'<sup>2</sup> She calls it flowery also, because in this estate the virtues are now perfect<sup>3</sup> in the soul and put into practice as works which are perfect and heroic, which thing could not be until the bed had become flowery in perfect union with God. Wherefore she says:

### Encompassed with dens of lions,

3. By means of the strength and acrimony of the lion she here compares the virtues possessed by the soul in this estate to the dens of lions, which dens are most secure and protected from all other beasts, since these fear<sup>4</sup> the strength and boldness of the lion that is within, and hence not only dare not to enter, but dare not even to tarry near.<sup>5</sup> Thus each of the virtues, when the soul at last possesses them in perfection, is like a lion's den, wherein the Spouse dwells and is present, Who is strong as a lion, and is united with the soul in that virtue and in each of the other virtues; and the soul herself, united with Him in these same virtues, is like a strong lion, for there she is given the properties

<sup>1</sup> Canticles i, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs viii, 31.

<sup>3</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'preferred.'

<sup>4</sup> The copy reads 'have,' and the Saint made the obvious correction [*teniendo to temiendo*]. V, Br alone retain 'have.'

<sup>5</sup> Gr: 'but [dare] not even to pass.'

of the Beloved. And in this case the soul is so well protected and so strong in each virtue and with all of them together in this union of God, which is the flowery bed, that not only does the devil not presume to attack her, but he dares not even to appear before her, by reason of the great fear which he has of her,<sup>1</sup> when he sees her so greatly exalted and emboldened with the perfect virtues in the bed of the Beloved. For, when she is united with God in transformation of love, the devil fears her as he fears God Himself,<sup>2</sup> and dares not even look upon her; so greatly does the devil fear the soul that has perfection.

4. This bed of the soul is encompassed with these virtues because in this estate they are linked among themselves, strengthened mutually and united in the soul's complete perfection in such a way that there is no place in it where the devil can enter, and furthermore the soul is protected so that naught in the world, be it high or low, can cause her unrest, disturb her or move her; for, being now free from all disturbance of the natural passions, and withdrawn and detached from the torture and diversity of temporal things, the soul has sure<sup>3</sup> fruition of the participation of God. This is that which was desired by the Bride in the Songs, where she says: *Quis det te mihi fratrem meum sugentem ubera matris meæ, ut inveniam te solum foris, et deosculer te, et iam me nemo despiciat?*<sup>4</sup> Which is to say: Would that Thou mightest be given to me, my brother, to suck the breasts of my mother, so that I may find Thee alone without, and that I may kiss Thee and that no man may now despise me! This kiss is the union whereof we are speaking, wherein the soul is made equal with God through love.<sup>5</sup> Wherefore she has this desire, asking to be given the Beloved that He may be her brother, which phrase signifies and makes equality;<sup>6</sup> and that He may suck the breasts of her mother, which signifies the consuming of all the imperfections and desires of her nature which she has from her mother Eve; and that she may find Him alone without, that is, may be united with Him alone, far away from all things,<sup>7</sup> detached, according to the will and the desire, from them all: and thus none will despise her, that is to say, neither world nor flesh nor devil will attack her; for, when the soul is free and purged from all these things and united with God, none of them can annoy her. Hence it is that the soul in this estate

<sup>1</sup> V, Vd, G, Br omit the words: 'by . . . her.'

<sup>2</sup> Lch reads: 'totally as God Himself;' [making bare sense in the original].

<sup>3</sup> Md modifies 'sure' by *como* ['as,' 'as it were'].

<sup>4</sup> Canticles viii, 1.

<sup>5</sup> [*en la cual se iguala con Dios por amor.*] Md modifies by adding: 'in a certain manner.'

<sup>6</sup> Md: 'and makes a certain manner of equality.'

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'without (i.e. outside) all things.']

enjoys an habitual sweetness and tranquillity which is never lost to her and never fails her.

5. But, over and above this habitual satisfaction and peace, the flowers, or virtues, of this garden whereof we speak are wont to open in the soul and diffuse their fragrance in it after such manner that the soul seems to be, and in fact is, filled with delights from God. And I said<sup>1</sup> that the flowers, or virtues, which are in the soul are wont to open, because, although the soul is full of virtues in perfection, it is not always actually enjoying them (although, as I have said, it does habitually enjoy the peace and tranquillity which they cause it); for we can say that in this life they are in the soul as flowers in bud, tightly closed, in a garden—it is a marvellous thing at times to see them all opening, by the work of the Holy Spirit, and diffusing marvellous scent and fragrance in great variety. For it will come to pass that the soul will see in itself the flowers of the mountains whereof we spoke above, which are the abundance and greatness and beauty of God; with these will be intertwined the lilies of the wooded valleys, which are rest, refreshment and protection; and then there will be placed among them the fragrant roses of the strange islands, which, as we said, are the strange kinds of knowledge concerning God; and likewise it will be assailed by the fragrance of the water-lilies from the sounding rivers, which we said were the greatness of God that fills the entire soul; and intertwined and enlaced with these is the delicate scent of the jasmine (which is the whisper of the amorous breezes), whereof we said likewise that the soul has fruition in this estate; and furthermore all the other virtues and gifts which come, as we said, from tranquil knowledge and silent music and sonorous solitude and the delectable supper of love. And the enjoyment and perception by the soul of these flowers is at times of such a kind that the soul can say with complete truth: ‘Our flowery bed, encompassed with dens of lions.’ Happy the soul that in this life merits at times to taste the fragrance of these Divine flowers. She says also that this bed is

### Hung<sup>2</sup> with purple

6. By purple, in the Divine Scripture, is denoted charity; kings are clad in it and use it. The soul says that this flowery bed is hung with purple, because all virtues, riches and good things are sustained by it, flourish in it and have fruition only in the charity and love of the King

<sup>1</sup> G: ‘I say,’ Bj, Br, Md: ‘She says.’ The Saint corrects the copy to ‘I said.’

<sup>2</sup> G, V, Vd, Br, Md: ‘dyed,’ with corresponding changes in the exposition.

of Heaven, without which love the soul could not enjoy this bed and its flowers. And thus all these virtues in the soul are, as it were, hung with the love of God, as with a substance which preserves them well; and they are, as it were, bathed in love, because all and each of them are ever enkindling the soul with love for God, and in all things and works they are moved by love to greater love. This is to be hung with purple. And she says that the bed is likewise

### **Builed in peace,**

7. Each of the virtues is of itself peaceful, meek and strong; and consequently, in the soul that possesses them, are produced these three effects, namely: peace, meekness and strength. And because this bed is flowery, composed of the flowers of virtues, as we have said, which are all peaceful, meek and strong, hence it comes to pass that the bed is builed in peace, and the soul is peaceful, meek and strong; which are three properties that can be attacked in no war, whether of world, devil or flesh. And the virtues keep the soul so peaceful and secure that it seems to her that she is wholly builed in peace. And she says, furthermore, that this bed is likewise

### **Crowned with a thousand shields of gold.**

8. She calls the virtues and gifts of the soul shields, saying thereof that the bed of the delight of the soul is crowned therewith; for not only do the virtues and gifts serve him that has gained them as a crown and prize, but they likewise serve him as a defence, and as strong shields against the vices which by their means he has conquered; wherefore the flowery bed is crowned with them as with a prize and defended by them as with the protection of a shield. And she says they are of gold, to denote the great worth of these virtues; the virtues are a crown and a defence. This very thing was said by the Bride in the Songs in other words, in this wise: *En lectulum Salomonis sexaginta fortes ambiunt ex fortissimis Israel, uniuscujusque ensis super femur suum propter timores nocturnos.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: Behold how threescore mighty men are about the bed of Solomon; the sword of each upon his thigh because of the fears of the nights.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Canticles iii, 7. *Mille clypei pendent ex ea, omnis armatura fortium.* This text the Saint puts in a marginal note. In the second redaction of the *Spiritual Canticle* he also glosses it, without, however, quoting it in Latin (cf. p. 304, below).

<sup>2</sup> Bz, Gr, Lch, 8,654, Bj, Md omit this translation.

## STANZA XVI

**In the track of<sup>1</sup> thy footprint    The young girls run along by the way.**

**At the touch of a spark, at the spiced wine,    Flows forth the Divine balsam.**

## EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza the Bride praises the Beloved for three favours which devout souls receive from Him, whereby they are the more incited and exalted to love God; of these, having experienced them in this estate, she here makes mention. The first, she says, is the sweetness which He gives them of Himself, and which is of such efficacy that it makes them to run very quickly upon the way of perfection. The second is a visit of love whereby they are suddenly enkindled in love. The third is abundance of charity infused into them, wherewith they are inebriated after such manner that their spirit is as greatly exalted with this inebriation as with the visit of love, so that they send forth praises to God, together with the delectable affections of love, saying as follows:

**In the track of thy footprint**

2. The footprint is the trace of Him Whose the footprint is, whereby the soul goes tracking and seeking out Him that made it. The sweetness and knowledge concerning Himself which God gives to the soul that seeks Him is the trace and footprint whereby it knows and seeks Him increasingly. Wherefore the soul says here to the Word its Spouse: 'In the track of Thy footprint'—that is, in the traces of sweetness which Thou imprintest upon them and wherewith Thou inspirest them, and in the fragrance of Thyself which Thou scatterest—

**The young girls run along by the way.**

3. This is to say that devout souls, with the youthful strength which they have received from the sweetness of Thy footprint, 'run along,'—that is, run in many places and after many manners (for this is the meaning of the phrase<sup>2</sup>) each one in the place and after the manner

<sup>1</sup> See p. 27, n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> [i.e. of the Spanish word *discurrir*, translated 'run along.' A more literal rendering would be 'run about,' 'roam about,' which, however, scarcely fits the sense of the first half-line.]

which God grants to it, according to its spirit and to the estate which it has reached, by means of a great variety of spiritual works and exercises, along the road of eternal life, which is evangelical perfection, on the which road they meet the Beloved in union of love after attaining detachment of the spirit from all things. This sweetness and this trace of Himself which God leaves in the soul lighten it greatly and make it to run after Him; for then the work done by the soul itself towards its journey along this road counts for very little or nothing; rather it is moved and attracted by this Divine footprint of God, not only to set forth, but to run along that road after many manners, as we have said. Wherefore the Bride in the Songs entreated the Spouse for this Divine attraction, saying: *Trahe me: post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum*.<sup>1</sup> That is: Draw me after Thee and we will run to the fragrance of Thine ointments. And, after He has given her this Divine fragrance, she says: *In odorem unguentorum tuorum currimis: adolescentulæ dilexerunt te nimis*.<sup>2</sup> Which is to say: At the fragrance of Thine ointments we run; the young girls loved Thee greatly.<sup>3</sup> And David says: 'I ran the way of Thy commandments when Thou didst enlarge my heart.'<sup>4</sup>

**At the touch of a spark, at the spiced wine, Flows forth the Divine balsam.**

4. In the first two lines we have explained how souls in the track of the footprint of the Beloved run along by the way by means of exercises and outward works; now in these last lines the soul describes the exercise which these souls perform inwardly with the will, moved by two other favours and inward visits which the Beloved grants them, which she here calls the touch of a spark and spiced wine; and the inward exercise of the will which results from these two visits and is caused by them she calls the flowings forth of Divine balsam. With respect to the first point, it must be known that this touch of a spark which she mentions here is a most subtle touch which the Beloved inflicts upon the soul at times, even when she is least expecting it, so that her heart is enkindled in the fire of love, just as if a spark of fire had flown out and kindled it. Then, with great rapidity, as when one suddenly awakens, the will is enkindled in loving, desiring, praising,

<sup>1</sup> Canticles i, 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Md reads: 'And after He gave her this Divine fragrance, by the infusion or effusion thereof in her soul, she says shortly before: *Ideo adolescentulæ dilexerunt te, curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum*. Therefore the young girls loved Thee, and with yearnings entreat Thee to bear them after Thee that they may run in Thy train.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm cxviii, 32 [A.V., cxix, 32].

giving thanks, doing reverence, esteeming and praying to God with savour of love. These things she calls the flowings forth of Divine balsam, which, at the touch of the spark, issues forth from the Divine love which struck the spark, which is the Divine balsam, that comforts and heals the soul with its fragrance and substance.

5. Concerning this Divine touch the Bride speaks in the Songs after this manner: *Dilectus meus misit manum suam per foramen, et venter meus intremuit ad tactum ejus.*<sup>1</sup> Which is to say: My Beloved put his hand through the opening and my bowels were moved at his touch. The touch of the Beloved is that touch of love which, as we here say, is inflicted upon the soul; the hand is the favour which He grants it therein; the opening whereby this hand has entered is the manner<sup>2</sup> and mode and degree of perfection which the soul possesses; for the touch is wont to be heavier or lighter according to this manner or that of the spiritual quality of the soul. The moving of the bowels whereof she speaks is that of the will whereupon the said touch is inflicted; and the moving thereof is the rising within her of desires and affections towards God, the desiring, loving and praising of Him, and the other things whereof we have spoken, which are the flowings forth of balsam produced by that touch, even as we said.

### The spiced wine.

6. This spiced wine is another and a far greater favour which God grants at times to souls that have made progress, inebriating them in the Holy Spirit with a wine of love that is sweet, delectable and strong, for the which cause she calls it spiced wine. For even as this spiced wine is prepared<sup>3</sup> with many and divers spices that are fragrant and strong, so this love, which is the love that God gives to those that are already perfect, is prepared and made ready in their souls, and spiced with the virtues which the soul has already gained. Seasoned with these precious spices, this love infuses into the soul such strength and abundance of sweet inebriation, in the visits that God makes to her, that with its great efficacy and strength it causes her to send forth to God these emissions or outflowings,<sup>4</sup> wherein she praises, loves and reverences Him, and so forth, as we are saying here, and this with wondrous desires to work and suffer for Him.

<sup>1</sup> Canticles v, 4.

<sup>2</sup> [Here again there is a play upon words, *manera* being used where we translate both 'opening' and 'manner.']

<sup>3</sup> [*cocido*: 'prepared by means of fermentation.']

<sup>4</sup> Br: 'deceptions'; G: 'inebriations.'

7. And it must be known that this favour of sweet inebriation passes not as quickly as the spark, for it is of greater duration. The spark touches and is gone, though its effect lasts for some time, and occasionally for a very long time, but the spiced wine and its effect are both accustomed to last long, and this, as I say, is love's sweetness in the soul. Sometimes it lasts for a day, or for two days; at other times, for many days, though not always at the same degree of intensity, since it weakens or increases, and the soul is unable to control it. Sometimes, when the soul has done nothing to produce it, it feels this sweet inebriation of its spirit and the enkindling of this Divine wine within its inmost substance, even as David says in these words: *Concaluit cor meum intra me, et in meditatione mea exardescet ignis*.<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: My heart grew hot within me and in my meditation fire will kindle. Sometimes the flowings forth of this inebriation of love last for as long as the inebriation; at other times, although the inebriation persists in the soul, it does so without the flowings forth aforementioned, and these, when they occur, are of greater or less intensity, according as the inebriation is of greater or less intensity. But the flowings forth or the effects of the spark habitually last longer than the spark itself; it leaves them in the soul, and they are more ardent than those which come from the inebriation, for at times this Divine spark leaves the soul consuming and burning away in love.

8. And, as we have spoken of wine that has been prepared by fermentation, it will be good at this point to note briefly the difference between fermented wine, which is called old, and new wine,<sup>2</sup> which will be the same as that between old and new lovers, and will provide a little instruction for spiritual persons. In new wine the lees have not yet been thrown off, and are not settled, wherefore the wine ferments, and its goodness and worth cannot be known until it has well settled on the lees and the fermentation has ceased.<sup>3</sup> Until that time there is great likelihood of its going bad; it has a rough and sharp taste, and to drink much of it is bad for the drinker; its strength is chiefly in the lees. In old wine the lees are digested and settled, so that there is no longer any fermentation going on in it as there is in new wine; it is quite evidently good, and quite safe from going bad, for that fermentation and bubbling of the lees which might cause it to do harm is all over; and thus well fermented wine very rarely goes bad or is spoiled. It has a

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xxxviii, 4 [A.V., xxxix, 3].

<sup>2</sup> Md differs verbally here [but the differences do not appear in translation].

<sup>3</sup> [Lir., 'until it has well digested the lees and fury of them.']

pleasant flavour, and the strength is in the substance of the wine and no longer in the taste, wherefore a draught of it gives the drinker good health and makes him strong.

9. New lovers are compared to new wine: these are they that are beginning to serve God, for the fermentations of the wine of their love are taking place wholly without, in their senses, since they have not yet settled on the lees of weak and imperfect sense, and the strength of their love resides only in its sweetness. These lovers ordinarily derive the strength to work from sweetness of sense, and by this sweetness they are moved, so that such love as theirs cannot be trusted until its fermentations and coarse tastes of sense are over. For, even as these fermentations and heats of sense can incline the soul to good and perfect love and serve it as a good means thereto, when the lees of its imperfection have settled, even so it is very easy in these beginnings, when these tastes are still new, for the wine of love to fail and be spoiled as soon as fervour and sweetness of new things have failed. And these new lovers always have yearnings and fatigues caused by love, which come from the senses; it is meet for them to temper their draught, for, if they are very active while the wine is still fermenting, their natures will be ruined. These yearnings and fatigues of love are the taste of the new wine, which, as we said, is rough and sharp, and not sweetened as yet by perfect preparation, after which these yearnings of love will cease, as we shall shortly say.

10. This same comparison is made by the Wise Man in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, where he says: *Vinum novum amicus novus: veterascet, et cum suavitate bibes illud.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: The new friend is as new wine; it shall grow old and thou shalt drink it with pleasure. Wherefore old lovers, which are they that are practised and proved in the service of the Spouse, are like old wine which has settled on the lees, so that it no longer has those fermentations<sup>2</sup> of the senses, or those fires and storms of fermentation<sup>3</sup> from without; the sweetness of the wine can be tasted in its substance, now that it is fermented and settled within the soul, and its taste is no longer in the senses, as with new lovers, but in the substance and savour of the spirit and truth in its works. And in these souls there shall be<sup>4</sup> no savours or fervours of sense, neither do they desire to experience them; for he that has his

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus ix, 15 [A.V., ix, 10].

<sup>2</sup> Bj: 'those vapours.'

<sup>3</sup> ['Storms' is literally 'furies.'] Bj reads: 'furies and furious fires'; Bz reads: 'forces' for 'storms.'

<sup>4</sup> [Lir., 'shall fall.'] Bz, Gr, Lch, 8,654, Md read: 'they see' for 'there shall be.'

taste settled upon sense has often perforce<sup>1</sup> to suffer pains and displeasures of sense. And since these old lovers have no sweetness that has its roots in sense, they have no more yearnings and pains of love in sense and soul; and thus it is a marvel if these old friends fail God, for they are already far above that which might make them fail—namely, the lower senses—and in them the wine of love is not only fermented and purged of its lees, but is also seasoned with the spices, which, as we said, are virtues in perfection, and allow it not to go bad like new wine. For this reason says the author of Ecclesiasticus: *Amicum antiquum ne deseras, novus enim non erit similis illi.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: Forsake not the old friend, for the new will not be like to him. In this the soul's wine of love, then, well proved and spiced, the Beloved produces the Divine inebriation which we have mentioned and which causes sweet outflowings to go forth to God. So the sense of the last lines is as follows: At the touch of the spark wherewith Thou awakenest my soul, and at the spiced wine wherewith Thou lovingly inebriatest me, my soul sends to Thee its outflowings, which are the movements<sup>3</sup> and acts of love occasioned by Thee within it.

## STANZA XVII

**In the inner cellar, of my Beloved have I drunk, And, when I  
went forth over all this meadow,<sup>4</sup>  
Then knew I naught<sup>5</sup> And lost the flock which I followed  
aforetime.**

### EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza the soul describes the sovereign favour which God has granted her by gathering her into the depth of His love, which is the union or transformation of love in God; and she notes two effects which she has derived therefrom—namely, forgetfulness and withdrawal<sup>6</sup> from all the things of the world, and the mortification of all its tastes and desires.

### In the inner cellar,

2. In order that I might say aught concerning this cellar, and explain that which the soul intends to denote by it, it would be needful that the Holy Spirit should take my hand and move my pen. This

<sup>1</sup> G, V, Vd, Br omit 'perforce.'

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiasticus ix, 14 [A.V., ix, 10].

<sup>3</sup> G, V: 'deservings.'

<sup>4</sup> Bj, Gr, Vd, Br: 'over all that meadow.'

<sup>5</sup> V has 'nothing'; the other versions 'no thing.'

<sup>6</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'abnegation.'

cellar whereof the soul here speaks is the last and most intimate degree of love to which the soul may attain<sup>1</sup> in this life, wherefore she calls it the inner cellar—that is to say, the innermost. From this it follows that there are others less interior, which are the degrees of love whereby the soul rises to this, the last of all. And we may say that there are seven of these degrees or cellars of love, all of which the soul comes to possess when she possesses in perfection the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, in the manner wherein she is able to receive them. And thus, when the soul attains to perfect possession of the spirit of fear, she has likewise in perfection the spirit of love, since that fear, which is the last of the seven gifts, is filial,<sup>2</sup> and the perfect fear of a son proceeds from the perfect love of a father. Hence, when the Divine Scripture desires to call a man perfect in charity, it speaks of him as fearing God. Wherefore Isaias, prophesying the perfection of Christ, said: *Replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini.*<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. And Saint Luke also describes the holy Simeon as full of fear, saying: *Erat vir justus, et timoratus,*<sup>4</sup> and this is also true of many others.

3. It must be known that many souls attain to the first cellars and enter therein, each according to the perfection of love which he possesses, but few in this life attain to this last and innermost perfection, for in this there comes to pass that perfect union with God which they call the Spiritual Marriage, whereof the soul speaks in this place. And that which God communicates to the soul in this most intimate union is completely ineffable, so that naught can be said thereof,<sup>5</sup> even as naught can be said concerning God Himself which may describe Him; for it is God Himself Who communicates this to the soul, and transforms her into Himself with marvellous glory, so that they are both in one, as we should say the window is one with the sun's ray, or coal with the fire, or the light of the stars with that of the sun—yet less essentially and completely so than will come to pass in the next life. And thus, in order to describe that which she receives from God in that cellar of union, the soul says naught else, nor do I believe that she could say aught more appropriate to express some part thereof, than the following line:

**Of my Beloved have I drunk,<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'wherein the soul may be situated.']

<sup>2</sup> Bj: 'is spiritual.'

<sup>3</sup> Isaias xi, 3 [A.V., xi, 2].

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke ii, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Md: 'is almost ineffable and scarce anything can be said thereof.'

<sup>6</sup> Br omits 'have I drunk.'

4. For, even as a draught is diffused and shed through all the members and veins of the body, even so is this communication from God diffused substantially in the entire soul, or, to express it better, the soul is more nearly transformed into God, according to which transformation the soul drinks of<sup>1</sup> its God according to its substance and its spiritual faculties. For according to the understanding it drinks<sup>2</sup> wisdom and knowledge; according to the will, it drinks<sup>2</sup> sweetest love; and, according to the memory, it drinks<sup>3</sup> recreation and delight in the remembrance and sense of glory. With respect to the first point, that the soul receives and drinks<sup>3</sup> delight substantially, the Bride herself says this, in the Canticles, after this manner: *Anima mea liquefacta est, ut sponsus locutus est.*<sup>4</sup> That is: My soul delighted<sup>5</sup> when the Spouse spake. The speaking of the Spouse signifies here His<sup>6</sup> communicating Himself to the soul. And that the understanding drinks wisdom is declared in the same book by the Bride, where, desiring to attain to this kiss of union and entreating the Spouse for it, she says: *Ibi me docebis, et dabo tibi poculum ex vino condito.*<sup>7</sup> That is: There Thou shalt teach me (namely, wisdom and knowledge in love); and I will give Thee a draught of spiced wine<sup>8</sup>—that is to say, of my love spiced with Thine, or, in other words, transformed into Thine.

5. With respect to the third point, which is that the will drinks there of love,<sup>9</sup> the Bride says this also in the said Book of the Songs, in these words: *Introduxit me Rex in cellam vinariam, ordinavit in me charitatem.*<sup>10</sup> Which is to say: He introduced me into the secret cellar and ordained charity in me; which is as much as to say: He gave me to drink love introduced into His love; or more clearly and properly speaking: He ordained in me His charity, accommodating His own charity to me and making it mine: this is the drinking by the soul of the very love of its Beloved, which its Beloved infuses into it.<sup>11</sup>

6. Here it is to be known, with respect to the saying of some that the will cannot love, save what the understanding first understands, that this has to be understood after a natural manner; for in the way of nature it is impossible to love if one understands not first that which

<sup>1</sup> G, Vd, Br: 'lives in.' [The change is only a slight one—*vive de* for *bebe de*—and *b, v* were (and are) in speech and in uneducated writing indistinguishable.]

<sup>2</sup> Vd, Br: 'lives.'

<sup>3</sup> Vd, Br: 'lives.'

<sup>4</sup> Canticles v, 6.

<sup>5</sup> [A poor translation. The Spanish (*se regaló*) does not correspond even approximately to *liquefacta est* ('melted').]

<sup>6</sup> Various versions omit 'His.'

<sup>7</sup> Canticles viii, 2.

<sup>8</sup> V, Vd, 8,654, Md [and P. Silverio's text]: read 'a spiced draught of wine.'

<sup>9</sup> Vd, Br: 'lives there on love.'

<sup>10</sup> Canticles ii, 4.

<sup>11</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'the drinking by man of the very love of his Beloved, which his Beloved infuses into him.'

one is to love; but in the supernatural way God can readily infuse love and increase it without infusing or increasing distinct knowledge, as is given to be understood in the passage quoted. And this is the experience of many spiritual persons, who oftentimes find themselves burning in the love of God without having a more distinct knowledge of Him than aforetime; for<sup>1</sup> they can understand little and love much, and they can understand much and love little. But habitually those spiritual persons who have not a very excellent understanding concerning God are wont to excel in will; and infused faith suffices them in the stead of intellectual knowledge; by means of which faith God infuses into them charity, and increases it within them, together with the act thereof, which is to love more, even though their knowledge be not increased, as we have said. And thus the will can drink of love without the understanding drinking anew of knowledge; although in the case of which we are speaking, wherein the soul says that she drank<sup>2</sup> of her Beloved, inasmuch as there is union<sup>3</sup> in the inner cellar, which is according to the three faculties of the soul, as we have said, all of them drink together.

7. And with respect to the fourth point—namely, that the soul drinks of its Beloved there according to the memory—it is clear that the soul is enlightened with the light of the understanding in remembering the good things which it is possessing and enjoying in the union of its Beloved.

8. This Divine draught so greatly deifies and exalts the soul and immerses it in God that

### When I went forth

9. That is to say, this favour has completely passed away, for although the soul is for ever in this high estate of marriage after God has placed it therein, yet it is not for ever in actual union according to the said faculties, although it is so according to the substance of the soul. But in this substantial union of the soul the faculties<sup>4</sup> are also very frequently in union, and drink in this cellar; the understanding by knowledge, the will by love, etc. So, when the soul now says 'When I went forth,' she understands not this of the essential or substantial union which she now possesses, which is the estate aforementioned,

<sup>1</sup> The Saint's addition, and the reading of G, V, Vd, Br.

<sup>2</sup> The Saint's correction of 'lived [on].'

<sup>3</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'inasmuch as He is loved.'

<sup>4</sup> Md modifies thus: '... although it is so according to the substance of the soul, through a most excellent grace. But in this gratuitous and substantial union of the soul the faculties . . . , etc.'

but of the union<sup>1</sup> of the faculties, which is not continuous in this life, neither can be so. She says, then, that when she went forth

**Over all this meadow,**

10. That is, over all this expanse of the world,

**Then knew I naught**

11. For that draught of the highest wisdom of God which there she drank makes her forget<sup>2</sup> all the things of the world. It seems to the soul that its former knowledge, and even the knowledge of the whole world, is pure ignorance by comparison with that knowledge; and that deification which it possesses, and the exaltation of the mind in God wherein it is as if enraptured, immersed in love, and become wholly absorbed in God, allows it not to take notice of any thing soever in the world; so that it may well say: 'Then knew I naught.' For it is withdrawn not only from all other things, but even from itself, and is annihilated, as though it were dissolved in love, which consists in passing from itself to the Beloved. This unknowing the Bride describes in the Songs, where, after having spoken of the union and the making of herself one with the Beloved, she says this word: *Nescivi*;<sup>3</sup> 'I knew not,' or 'I was ignorant.' The soul in such a condition will intervene little in things of others, since it remembers not even its own things; and the Spirit of God has this characteristic in the soul wherein He dwells, that He forthwith inclines it toward unknowing and makes it to be ignorant of all the things of others, especially things that are not to its profit. For the Spirit of God is recollected within the soul,<sup>4</sup> and goes not forth to things of others, and thus the soul remains in a complete unknowing.

12. It is not to be understood that the soul in this case loses its habits of knowledge, although these no longer dominate it, because in this union they are joined with a higher wisdom, and it is this which works; just as, when a small light unites with another that is great, it is the greater that overwhelms the lesser and gives light. It is in this sense that the soul 'knew naught' of those habits; and this, I suppose, will be the position in Heaven as concerning acquired knowledge: it will be of

<sup>1</sup> Md: 'of the actual union.'

<sup>2</sup> Some versions read: 'Through that draught . . . drank, He makes her forget.' The correction [a very slight one in the original] is the Saint's.

<sup>3</sup> Canticles vi, 11 [A.V., vi, 12]. Lch, Gr, 8,654, Md add: 'Which signifies.'

<sup>4</sup> The words 'within the soul' are the Saint's marginal addition and are not found in either Codices or editions.

no<sup>1</sup> great importance to the righteous, for they will know more in the Divine wisdom than it can teach them. The soul, then, although it remains in that unknowing, suffers not the total loss of its knowledge, with respect to the things that it knew aforetime, but it loses the act and memory of things in that absorption of love, and this for two reasons: the one, because, as it is actually absorbed and immersed in that draught of love, it cannot actually be in aught else; the other, because that transformation in God makes it conform with His simplicity and purity, after such manner as to leave it clean and pure and empty of all forms and figures which it had aforetime, for the act has ever these forms with it.<sup>2</sup> Just so, when the sun shines upon a window, and infuses itself therein, it makes it bright, so that all the stains and specks<sup>3</sup> which formerly appeared upon it are lost from sight; but, when the sun departs again and completely withdraws itself from the window, the mists<sup>4</sup> and stains appear upon it once more. In the soul, however, since the effect of that act of love remains with it and endures, there likewise endures<sup>5</sup> this, that it knows naught through its natural habits but only through acts of knowledge; although from the nature of the infused superior habit these habits persist with respect to the exercises, the soul is dissolved in that transformation wherein, inflamed and changed in love,<sup>6</sup> it was annihilated and undone as to all that which was not love, and left so that it knew naught else save love. This agrees with what we said above concerning David, who writes: *Quia inflammatum est cor meum, et renes mei commutati sunt et ego ad nihilum redactus sum, et nescivi.*<sup>7</sup> Which is to say: For my heart was inflamed, and together with it my reins also were changed, and I was dissolved into nothing and I knew naught. For the reins to be changed by reason of this inflaming of the heart signifies for the soul to be

<sup>1</sup> This word is conjectural. The whole passage ('although these no longer . . . teach them') is added by the Saint in the margin of the Codex of Sanlúcar de Barrameda, which is badly cut, so that many letters are missing. See the photograph on p. 225 of Vol. I of *Cántico Espiritual y Poemas*, ed. P. Silverio, Burgos, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase 'for . . . with it' is an interlinear addition of the Saint's.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'short hairs.' The Spanish word (*pelillo*) is often used in the sense of 'trifle.']

<sup>4</sup> [*nieblas*, a word often used by Spanish mystical writers in a technical sense. Cf. p. 170, n. 3 below.]

<sup>5</sup> MSS. and editions have 'endures to some extent.' The Saint suppressed the adverbial phrase.

<sup>6</sup> The whole of this sentence, down to this point, follows the Saint's interlinear and marginal corrections, which, like those described in n. 1, above, are mutilated. (*Cántico*, etc., ed. cit., I, p. 226.) The original version reads: ' . . . remains with it and endures to some extent, there likewise endures this, that it knows not, as we have said, how great is the duration of the effect and relish of that act, whereby, inflamed and changed . . . , etc.'

<sup>7</sup> Psalm cxvii, 21 [A.V., cxliii, 21-2].

changed in God, with all its desires, after a new manner, and for all those old things, which it used aforetime, to be abandoned; for which reason the Psalmist says that he was dissolved into nothing, and that he knew naught, which, as we said, are the two effects caused by the draught from this cellar of God. For not only is all that first knowledge which the soul possessed annihilated, so that it seems nothing at all to it by comparison with that highest knowledge, but likewise all its former life and imperfections are annihilated and the old man is renewed; wherefore there follows this second effect that flows from this, which is contained in the line following:

**And (I) lost the flock which I followed aforetime.**

13. This signifies that, until the soul attains to this state of perfection whereof we are speaking, however spiritual it may be, there ever remains to it a little flock, as it were, consisting of some of its desires and petty tastes and other of its imperfections—sometimes natural, sometimes spiritual—after which it goes, endeavouring to pasture them while following them and satisfying them. For with respect to the understanding there are wont to remain to such souls certain imperfections concerning the desire to know things. With respect to the will, they permit themselves to be carried away by certain petty tastes and desires of their own. These may be temporal, like the possession of certain small things, preference for one thing over another, and certain kinds of presumption, esteem and punctilio to which they pay heed, and other little things which still reek and savour of the world.<sup>1</sup> Or they may be natural, like food, drink and an inclination for this rather than for that, and a choosing and desiring of the best. Or, again, they may be spiritual, like the desire for consolations from God and other irrelevances, which I might never cease retailing, which things are wont to cling to spiritual men who are not yet perfect. And, with respect to the memory, there are many varieties of things and cares and irrelevant reflections which draw the soul after them.

14. Sometimes, again, with respect to the four passions of the soul, there are many<sup>2</sup> useless hopes, joys, griefs and fears after which the soul goes in pursuit. As to this flock aforesaid, some are attracted by more of such things and others by less; but they continually pursue

<sup>1</sup> G has: 'These may be either temporal or spiritual, as the possession of a few little things which still reek and savour of the world.'

<sup>2</sup> G, V: 'a few.'

them, until they enter this inner cellar to drink and lose their flock entirely, becoming, as we have said, wholly turned into love, wherein these flocks—that is, these imperfections of the soul—are consumed more easily than rust and mould upon metals are consumed in the fire. So the soul feels itself to be free from all these childish likes and dislikes and follies which it pursued, and it can indeed say: ‘I lost the flock which I followed aforetime.’

## STANZA XVIII

**There he gave me his breast; There he taught me a science most delectable;<sup>1</sup>**

**And I gave myself to him indeed, reserving nothing; There I promised him to be his bride.**

## EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza the Bride describes the surrender which was made upon either side in this spiritual betrothal, namely, that betwixt herself and God; saying that, in that inner cellar of love, they were united through the communication of Himself to her, when He gave her freely the breast of His love, showing her therein wisdom and secrets; and likewise through the communication of herself to Him, when she surrendered herself to Him indeed<sup>2</sup> and wholly, without reserving aught either for herself or for another, and declaring herself to be His for ever. The line follows:

**There he gave me his breast;**

2. For one to give the breast to another signifies to give that one his love and friendship and to reveal to him his secrets as to a friend. Thus, when the soul says that He gave her His breast there, she means that He communicated to her there His love and His secrets, which God grants to the soul in this estate. Further, there is that which she says also in this line following:<sup>3</sup>

**There he taught me a science most delectable;**

3. The delectable science which she says here that He taught her is

<sup>1</sup> Br: ‘learned’; *sabiosa* for *sabrosa*.

<sup>2</sup> Lch reads: ‘completely undone’ (*toda deshecha*) for ‘indeed and wholly’ (*toda de hecho*).

<sup>3</sup> The Saint interpolates ‘following,’ which is also found in G, V, Vd, Br.

mystical theology—the secret<sup>1</sup> science of God, which spiritual men call contemplation; this is most delectable, since it is science through love, the which love is its master and that which makes it to be wholly delectable. And inasmuch as God communicates to the soul this science and knowledge in the love wherewith He communicates Himself to her, it is delectable to her understanding, since it is a science which pertains thereto; and likewise it is delectable to her will, since it consists in love, which pertains to the will. She says next:

**And I gave myself to him indeed, reserving nothing;**

4. In that sweet draught of God, wherein, as we have said, the soul is immersed in God, it surrenders itself, most willingly and with great sweetness,<sup>2</sup> to Him wholly, desiring to be wholly His and never again to have aught in itself that is alien from Him. God grants it, in the said union, the purity and the perfection<sup>3</sup> which are necessary for this; for, inasmuch as He transforms the soul into Himself, He makes it to be wholly His and empties it of all that it possessed and that was alien from God. Wherefore the soul is indeed completely given up to God, reserving naught, not only according to its will, but also according to its works, even as God has given Himself freely to the soul. So these two wills are surrendered, satisfied and given up the one to the other, so that neither shall fail the other, as in the faithfulness and stability of a betrothal. Wherefore the Bride adds these words:

**There I promised him to be his bride.**

5. For even as a maiden that is betrothed sets not her love upon another than her spouse, nor directs her thoughts<sup>4</sup> or her actions to any other, even so the soul in this estate has no longer any affections of the will or acts of knowledge of the understanding, nor any care or action which is not wholly turned to God, together with its desires. It is, as it were, Divine and deified, so that in even its first movements it has<sup>5</sup> naught whereto the will of God is opposed, in so far as it can understand. For even as in an imperfect soul its first movements at least, according to the understanding and according to the will and memory and desires, are as a general rule inclined<sup>6</sup> to evil and imperfection, even so, the soul in this estate, according to the understanding and will and memory and desires, in its first movements, is as a general

<sup>1</sup> Lch: 'the written.'

<sup>2</sup> Bj: 'humility.'

<sup>3</sup> Lch has a [clearly corrupt] variant reading here.

<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'her care.']

<sup>5</sup> Md adds: 'ordinarily.'

<sup>6</sup> V, Vd, Br have an erroneous reading here (*indignados* for *inclinados*).

rule moved and inclined to God, through the great help and stability which it already has in God and through its perfect conversion to that which is good. All this David clearly explained when he said, speaking of his soul in this estate: 'Shall not my soul perchance be subject to God? Yea, for from Him cometh my salvation, and He is my God and my Saviour; my Receiver, I shall not be any more moved.'<sup>1</sup> By saying 'my Receiver,' he means that, because his soul is received in God and united in Him, as we say here, he could not be moved against God any more.

## STANZA XIX

**My soul has employed<sup>2</sup> itself And all my possessions in his service:**

**Now I guard no flock nor have I now other office, For now my exercise is in loving alone.<sup>3</sup>**

## EXPOSITION

**I**NASMUCH as in the last stanza the soul has said (or, rather, the Bride has said) that she has given herself wholly to the Spouse, and has reserved naught for herself, she now, in this stanza, sets forth the manner and mode wherein she accomplishes this. She says that her soul and her body and her faculties and all her abilities are occupied, no longer in the things which concern herself, but in those which pertain to the service of her Spouse. And that for this reason she no longer goes about seeking her own gain, nor pursues her own tastes, nor busies herself in other things, and in intercourse that has naught to do with God, and is alien to Him. And that even with God Himself she has no other style or manner of intercourse save the exercise of love, inasmuch as she has changed and bartered that earlier mode of intercourse which she had with Him into love, as she will now say:

**My soul has employed itself**

2. In saying that her soul has employed itself, the Bride refers to the surrender of herself which she made to the Beloved in that union of love wherein her soul, with all its faculties, understanding, will and

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxi, 2 [A.V., lxii, 1-2].

<sup>2</sup> G, V, Gr: 'surrendered.' [Cf. the first words of §2, below.]

<sup>3</sup> [On the imagery of this and the next stanza, see Dámaso Alonso, *La Poesía de San Juan de la Cruz*, Madrid, 1942, pp. 137-8.]

memory, was dedicated and subjected to His service. Her understanding she employs in the understanding of those things that pertain most nearly to His service in order to do them; her will, in loving all that pleases God and in having affection of the will for God in all things; and her memory, in caring for that which pertains to His service and will be most pleasing to Him. And she says further:

**And all my possessions in his service:**

3. By all her possessions she here understands all that pertains to the sensual part of the soul, which things, she says, are employed in His service, even as is the rational or the spiritual part whereof we have just spoken in the last line. In this sensual part is included the body with all its senses and faculties, both interior and exterior. In this line is understood also all ability of the nature and the reason, as we have said—namely, the four passions, the natural and spiritual desires, and the other possessions of the soul, all of which things, she says, are now employed in His service. For she now orders the body according to God, rules and governs the inward and outward senses according to God and directs their actions towards Him; and all the four passions likewise she keeps bound<sup>1</sup> to God; because she neither has enjoyment save from God, neither has hope save in God, nor fears any save God, neither does she grieve save according to God; and likewise her desires are directed alone to God, with all her cares.

4. All these possessions are now employed in God, in such manner that all the parts thereof which we have described tend,<sup>2</sup> in their first movements, without the soul's being conscious of it, to work in God and for God. For the understanding, the will and the memory go straightway to God; and the affections, the senses, the desires and appetites, hope, joy and all the rest of the soul's possessions are inclined to God from the first moment, even though, as I say, the soul may not realize that it is working for God. Wherefore the soul in such case very frequently works for God, and is intent upon Him and the things that pertain to Him, without thinking or remembering that it is doing aught for Him; for the use and habit which it has acquired in this manner of procedure deprives it of such realization and effort, and even of the fervent acts<sup>3</sup> which it was wont to have at the beginning. And since all these possessions are employed in God after the manner

<sup>1</sup> Lch: 'ordered.'

<sup>2</sup> Md adds: 'ordinarily.'

<sup>3</sup> Md adds: 'of sensible devotion.'

aforesaid, the soul must needs likewise have that which it describes in the line following, namely:

**Now I guard no flock**

5. Which is as much as to say: Now I go no longer after my tastes and desires; for, having set them upon God and given them to Him, the soul no longer pastures them nor guards them for herself. And not only does she say that she no longer guards a flock, but she says further:

**Nor have I now other office,**

6. Many offices, and unprofitable ones, has the soul before she goes so far as to make this gift and surrender to the Beloved of herself and of her possessions; for all the habits of imperfections that she had may be described as so many occupations, which may have respect to speaking and thinking and acting, and she was accustomed not to behave in these things as is meet and fitting for perfection. With respect to this a soul is ever inclined to some vicious employment which it never completely conquers until it truly employs its possessions in the service of God; and, as we have said, all its words and thoughts and actions are then of God, and it no longer occupies itself in murmuring, nor in any other imperfection, whether of speech or of the other faculties; and thus it is as though she were to say: I am no longer occupied or busied in other commerce or pastimes or things of the world.

**For now my exercise is in loving alone.**

7. This is as though she had said: All these faculties and all the ability wherewith my soul and my body are provided, which aforetime I employed to some extent upon other useless things, I have set upon the exercise of love. This is that which David says: *Fortitudinem meam ad te custodiam*.<sup>1</sup> Which signifies that all the ability of my soul and body is moved through love, that all that I do I do through love, and all that I suffer I suffer for love's sake.

8. Here it is to be noted that, when the soul attains to this estate, all its exercise, both of its spiritual part and of its sensual part,<sup>2</sup> be it in doing or in suffering, after whatsoever manner it be, causes it ever greater love and greater delight in God;<sup>3</sup> and even the very exercise of

<sup>1</sup> [Psalm lviii, 10: A.V., lix, 9.] This sentence is a marginal addition of the Saint's [cf. *Cántico*, etc., *ed. cit.*, II, p. 7], not found in Br, Md, or the Codices, which read: '... in the exercise of love; which signifies that all . . . , etc.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz, 8,654, Gr, Lch, Bj, Md: 'both that of its spiritual part, which is the soul, and that of its sensual part, which is the body.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz., 8,654, Gr, Lch, Bj, Md 'in the Beloved.'

prayer and converse with God which it was frequently wont to have in considerations of a different kind and in other ways, is now wholly the exercise of love. So that, whether its commerce be with temporal things, or whether its exercise be concerning spiritual things,<sup>1</sup> a soul in this case can ever say: 'For now my exercise is in loving alone.'

9. Happy life and happy estate and happy the soul that arrives thereat, where all is now substance of love to it, and joy and delight of betrothal; wherein the Bride may indeed say to the Divine Spouse those words which she addresses to Him out of pure love in the Songs:<sup>2</sup> *Omnia poma nova, et vetera, servavi tibi.*<sup>3</sup> Which is as if she should say: My Beloved, I desire for Thy sake to have all that is hard and wearisome, and all that is sweet and delectable I desire for Thee. But the sense of this line, as we have interpreted it, is that the soul in this estate of the Spiritual Betrothal walks habitually in union of the love of God, which is the common and habitual presence of the loving will in God.<sup>4</sup>

## STANZA XX

**If, then, on the common land, From henceforth I am neither  
seen nor found,  
You will say that I am lost; That, wandering love-stricken, I  
lost my way and was found.<sup>5</sup>**

## EXPOSITION<sup>6</sup>

**T**HE soul, in this stanza, makes answer to a tacit reproach uttered by those of the world,<sup>7</sup> which they are wont to direct to such as give themselves truly to God; for they consider them extravagant in their queerness and aloofness, and in their general behaviour, and also say that they are useless in important matters and are lost with respect to all things that the world prizes and esteems. This reproach the soul meets in an excellent way, facing it very boldly and daringly,

<sup>1</sup> Bz, 8,654, Gr, Lch, Bj, Md add: 'and commerce with God.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz, 8,654, Gr, Lch, Md: 'in the Divine Songs.'

<sup>3</sup> Canticles vii, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Gr, 8,654, Bj, Md: 'in the union of love, which is the common presence of the will in God.' Lch, Bj: 'in the union of love, which is as the presence of the loving will in God.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'gained.']

<sup>6</sup> For the version of the Exposition in the Granada group of MSS. see Appendix, p. 400, below.

<sup>7</sup> The last six words are the Saint's addition, which is found also in G, V, Vd, Br.

as it faces all else that the world can impute to it, for, having attained to a living love of God, it takes little heed thereof. And not only so, but the Bride herself confesses it in this stanza, and glories and boasts of having done such things and become lost to the world and to herself for the sake of her Beloved. And thus her meaning in this stanza, where she speaks to those of the world, is that, if they no longer see her in the places which she frequented formerly, following the pastimes which she was wont to follow in the world, they are to say and to believe that she has become lost to them and is withdrawn from them, and that she considers this so great a gain that she has herself desired thus to be lost in going after her Beloved and seeking Him, enkindled as she is with love for Him. And, that they may see how great a gain to her is this loss, and may not consider it to be folly or delusion, she says that this loss was her gain and that she became lost of set purpose.

**If, then, on the common land, From henceforth I am neither seen nor found,**

2. By 'common land' is ordinarily meant a place common to all, where people are wont to come together to have solace and recreation, and where likewise shepherds pasture their flocks; and thus the soul here understands by this common land the world, where worldly folk pursue their pastimes and converse, and pasture the flocks of their desires. Herein the soul says to those of the world that if she is not seen or found as she was before she became wholly God's, they are to consider her, by reason of this very fact, as lost; and that they may say this, since she rejoices in it and desires them to say it. She adds:

**You will say that I am lost;**

3. He that loves is not abashed before the world concerning the works which he does for God, neither does he hide them with shame, even though the whole world condemn them. For he that is ashamed to confess the Son of God before men, and ceases to do His works, the same Son of God, as He says through Saint Luke, will be ashamed to confess him before His Father.<sup>1</sup> Wherefore the soul, with the courage of her love, takes pride in having been seen doing such work to the glory of her Beloved and having become lost therein to all things of the world. Wherefore she says: 'You will say that I am lost.'

4. Few spiritual persons attain to this perfect boldness and determination in their works; for although some behave thus, or attempt to

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke ix, 26.

do so, and some consider themselves to be very far advanced therein, they never completely lose themselves with respect to certain points, whether connected with the world or with their own natures, nor do they do work for Christ which is perfect and completely detached, looking not at what will be said of them or at what will appear. Such as these will be unable to say, 'You will say that I am lost,' for they are not lost to themselves in their works; they are still ashamed to confess Christ in their works before men; they have respect for things of the world; they live not truly in Christ.

**That, wandering love-stricken,**

5. This is to say that, wandering stricken with love for God, and practising the virtues,

**I lost my way<sup>1</sup> and was found.<sup>2</sup>**

6. He that is indeed in love allows himself to be lost to all things else,<sup>3</sup> that he may have the greater gain as to that which he loves; wherefore the soul says here that she became lost—that is, that she allowed herself to be lost of set purpose. And this is after two manners, as follows. First, she is lost to herself: she takes no thought for herself in any way, but only for the Beloved; surrenders herself to Him freely and disinterestedly;<sup>4</sup> and in this wise becomes lost to herself, and desires no gain for herself in any way soever. Secondly, she is lost to all things, and takes no heed of aught<sup>5</sup> pertaining to herself, but only of those things that concern the Beloved; and this is to become lost, namely, to desire that others may gain her.<sup>6</sup>

7. Such is he that walks love-stricken for God, and that aspires to no gain or prize, but only to lose all things and to be lost to himself in his will for God's sake, which he holds as gain. And gain it is, even as Saint Paul declares when he says: *Mori lucrum*.<sup>7</sup> That is: My dying for Christ is my spiritual gain as to all things and to Himself.<sup>8</sup> Wherefore

<sup>1</sup> [Or 'I became lost,' as sometimes below.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'gained,' and so throughout the paragraph. The play of words in n. 6 below, has greater point on this account.]

<sup>3</sup> In the margin the Saint here wrote 'two masters,' evidently struck with an idea which, as will be seen, he develops in the second redaction (see p. 331, below).

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'without any interest'—evidently, in its context, a semi-metaphorical expression.]

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'of all things.']

<sup>6</sup> [*que es tener gana que la ganen*. The play upon words is untranslatable. For 'gain,' understand 'find'; cf. n. 2, above.]

<sup>7</sup> [Philippians i, 21.]

<sup>8</sup> Md.: 'My dying for Christ spiritually as to all things, and to itself, is my gain, and as to Himself.'

the soul says: 'I was found'; for he that cannot be lost after this manner is not found, but is indeed lost, even as Our Lord says in the Gospel, in these words: 'He who will gain his life for himself, the same shall lose it; and he who loses his life for My sake, the same shall gain it.'<sup>1</sup> And if we desire to understand this said line more spiritually and more to the purpose for the which it is here used, it must be known that, when a soul on the spiritual road has reached such a point that it has become lost to all natural modes and ways of progress in converse with God, so that it seeks Him no longer by meditations or forms or feelings or any other means which belong to creatures and to sense, but has passed beyond all this and beyond all modes and manners of its own, having converse with God and fruition of Him in faith and love: then it says that it has indeed gained God, for indeed it has become lost to all that is not God and to that which it is in itself.<sup>2</sup>

## STANZA XXI

**With flowers and emeralds Gathered in the cool mornings<sup>3</sup>  
We will make the garlands flowering in thy love And inter-  
woven with one hair from my head.**

## EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza the Bride speaks again with the Spouse in the communion and refreshment of love, and that which she does therein is to treat of the solace and delight that the Bride-Soul and the Son of God have in the possession of the riches of each other's virtues and gifts and in the mutual exercise of these, having fruition thereof between themselves in the communion of the union of love. Therefore, in speaking with Him, she says that they will make rich garlands of gifts and virtues, acquired and gained in a pleasant and convenient season, beautified and made graceful in the<sup>4</sup> love which He has for her and sustained and preserved in the love which she has for Him. Wherefore she calls this fruition of the virtues making garlands of them; because in all of them, as in flowers that are in a garland, they both have joy in the mutual love which each bears to the other.

**With flowers and emeralds**

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew xvi, 25.

<sup>2</sup> The last eight words are the Saint's addition, and are copied by G, V, Vd, Br.

<sup>3</sup> Lch: 'mountains.'

<sup>4</sup> The Saint altered 'His' to 'the.' The correction is not in the MSS. nor in Br or Md.

2. The flowers are the virtues of the soul and the emeralds are the gifts which it has of God. These flowers and emeralds are

### Gathered in the cool mornings

3. This signifies that they are gained and acquired in youth, which is life's cool morning.<sup>1</sup> She says they are 'gathered,' because the virtues that are acquired in this time of youth are choice<sup>2</sup> and most acceptable to God, since in the season of youth there is more resistance on the part of the vices to their acquisition, and a greater inclination and readiness to lose them on the part of nature;<sup>3</sup> and also because, since the soul begins to pluck them from this season of her youth onward, the virtues which she acquires are much more perfect and more choice. She calls these times of youth the cool mornings, because even as the cool of the morning is more pleasant in spring than are other parts of the day, even so is the virtue of youth before God. And these cool mornings may also be interpreted as the acts of love wherein the virtues are acquired, which are more pleasing to God than are cool mornings to the sons of men.

4. Likewise are understood here by the cool mornings works which are performed at times of spiritual aridity and hardship, which are denoted by the coolness of winter mornings; and these works, performed for God's sake at times of spiritual aridity and hardship, are greatly prized by God, because the virtues and gifts are richly acquired therein. And those which are acquired after this manner and with labour are for the most part choicer, rarer and more lasting than if they were acquired only at times of spiritual sweetness and delight; and in aridity and hardship and labour and temptation virtue takes root, even as God said to Saint Paul, in these words: *Virtus in infirmitate perficitur*.<sup>4</sup> That is: Virtue is made perfect in weakness. Wherefore, in order to extol<sup>5</sup> the excellence and the virtues whereof garlands are to be made for the Beloved, it is well said: 'Gathered in the cool mornings,' because the Beloved has great joy only in those flowers and emeralds—which are virtues and gifts—that are choice and perfect, and not in those which are imperfect. Wherefore the Bride-Soul says here that for Him, and of these flowers and emeralds,

### We will make the garlands

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'in the times of youth (*juventudes*) which are the cool mornings of the ages.']

<sup>2</sup> [The word translated 'choice' is *escogidas*, which has the double meaning of 'gathered,' and is thus used in the stanza, and of 'picked,' 'select,' 'choice,' in which sense it is used here.]

<sup>3</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'and on the part of nature, which is more inclined and ready to lose them.'

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Gr: 'contain.'

5. For the understanding hereof it must be known that all the virtues and gifts which the soul, and God in the soul, acquire, are in the soul as a garden of various flowers wherewith it is marvellously beautified, even as with a vesture of rare variety. For the better comprehension hereof it must be known that, even as the material flowers are gathered one by one and made into the garland which is gradually formed from them, so, after the same manner, as the spiritual flowers of virtues and gifts are acquired one by one, they are gradually set in order in the soul. And, when they have all been acquired, the garland of perfection is then completed in the soul, so that both the soul and the Spouse rejoice when they are beautified and adorned with this garland, even as in the estate of perfection. These are the garlands which the Bride says have to be made, and this is to gird and surround oneself with a variety of flowers and emeralds, which are perfect gifts and virtues, in order to appear worthily with this beauteous and precious adornment before the face of the King, and to merit being placed on an equality with Him, even as a queen by His side, which the soul merits through the beauty of its variety.<sup>1</sup> Thus David, speaking with Christ in such a case, said: *Astitit Regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato, circumdata varietate.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: Upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in vesture of gold, surrounded with variety. Which is as much as to say: Upon Thy right hand did she stand vested in perfect love and surrounded with a variety of perfect virtues and gifts.<sup>3</sup> She says not: 'I alone will make the garlands,' nor yet 'Thou alone wilt make them,' but 'We will make them, both of us together'; for the virtues cannot be wrought by the soul alone, nor can she attain to them alone, without the help of God, neither does God work them alone in the soul without her co-operation; for, although it is true that every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from above, descending from the Father of lights, as Saint James says,<sup>4</sup> yet no such thing as this is received apart from the capacity and without the co-operation of the soul that receives it. The Bride, in the Songs, speaks of this with the Spouse, saying: *Trahe me: post te curremus in odorem*, etc.<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: Draw me after Thee, we will run. So the movement towards goodness must come from God, and from God alone, as is here

<sup>1</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'through the beauty of its virtue.' Bj: 'through the beauty of its sweetness.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xlv, 10 [A.V., xlv, 9].

<sup>3</sup> The Saint here wrote in the margin *Fulcite*, perhaps with the intention of adding something which he did not in fact carry out. [Cf. pp. 159, n. 3, 338, n. 8, below.]

<sup>4</sup> St. James i, 17.

<sup>5</sup> Canticles i, 3 [A.V., i, 4].

declared; but the writer says not that he alone will run, or she alone, but that they will run both of them together—that is, that God and the soul will work together.

6. This short line is understood with great propriety of the Church and of Christ, wherein His Bride, who is the Church, speaks with Him, saying: 'We will make the garlands.' By garlands are here understood all the holy souls begotten by Christ in the Church, each one of whom is as a garland adorned with flowers of virtues and gifts, and all of whom together are a garland for the head of Christ the Spouse. And likewise by the beauteous garlands can be understood the halos (which is another name for them), made likewise by Christ and the Church. These are of three kinds. The first is of the beauteous white flowers of all the Virgins, each with its halo of virginity, and all of them together will be a halo to be placed upon the head of Christ the Spouse. The second halo is that of the resplendent flowers of the holy Doctors, each with his halo as a doctor, and all of them together will be a halo to place upon the head of Christ above that of the Virgins.<sup>1</sup> The third is composed of the crimson carnations of the Martyrs, each one likewise with his martyr's halo,<sup>2</sup> all of which together will be one halo, forming as it were a crown to the halo of Christ the Spouse. So greatly beautified and so gracious to the sight with these three garlands will be Christ the Spouse that there will be said in Heaven that which the Bride says of Him in the Songs, namely: 'Go forth, daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him on the day of his betrothal and on the day of the joy of his heart.'<sup>3</sup> We will make these garlands, then, she says,

### **Flowering in thy love**

7. The flower which belongs to good works and virtues is the grace and virtue which they derive from the love of God, without which not only would they not be flowering but they would all be dry and worthless before God, even though humanly they were perfect. But because He gives His grace and love these works flower in His love.

### **And interwoven with one hair from my head.**

8. This hair of hers is her will and the love which she has for the Beloved, the which love possesses and performs the same office as the

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is omitted, through an oversight, from G, V, Vd, Br.

<sup>2</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'martyr's laurel.'

<sup>3</sup> [Canticles iii, 11.]

thread in the garland; for, even as the thread binds and ties the flowers in the garland, so the love of the soul binds and ties the virtues in the soul and sustains them within her. For, as Saint Paul says, charity is the bond and link of perfection.<sup>1</sup> So that in this love of the soul the supernatural gifts and virtues are so essentially bound together that, if it were to break by failing God,<sup>2</sup> then all the virtues of the soul would become loosed and would fail, even as the flowers would fall apart if the thread of the garland were to be broken. So that it suffices not for God to have love towards us that He may give us virtues; we too must have love towards Him that we may receive and keep them. She says 'one hair' of her head, and not 'many hairs,' in order to convey the fact that her will is now set upon Him alone, and detached from all other hairs, which are strange affections for others. Herein she markedly insists upon the worth and price of these garlands of virtues; for, when love is single and firmly fixed upon God, in the way that is here described, the virtues are likewise perfect and complete, and flower freely in the love of God; for then the love which He has toward the soul is inestimable, even as the soul declares in the stanza following.

## STANZA XXII

**By that hair alone Which thou regardedst fluttering on my neck,  
Beholding it upon my neck, thou wert captivated, And wert  
wounded<sup>3</sup> by one of mine eyes.<sup>4</sup>**

## EXPOSITION

**T**HREE things are signified by the soul in this stanza. First, she declares that that love wherewith the virtues are bound together is nothing less than a strong love, for in truth it must be such in order that the virtues may be preserved. Secondly, she says that God was greatly captivated by this her hair of love, seeing that it was one only and was so strong. Thirdly, she says that God was

<sup>1</sup> Colossians iii, 14.

<sup>2</sup> [So the Spanish. The meaning is: 'if the *bond of love* were to break by the soul's failing God.']

<sup>3</sup> [The verb is *llagar*, and so throughout this chapter. See p. 53, n. 1, above.]

<sup>4</sup> [The Saint is here following Canticles iv, 9. P. Crisógono (*San Juan de la Cruz*, etc., Madrid, 1929, Vol. II, p. 27) sees also (I am not sure with how much justification) the influence of a sonnet by Garcilaso de la Vega. Dámaso Alonso (*La Poesía de San Juan de la Cruz*, Madrid, 1942, pp. 140-2: cf. also pp. 35-6) also cites a possible MS. source, which, however, I should think it unlikely that the Saint used.]

intimately enamoured of her, seeing the purity and integrity of her faith. And she says thus :

**By that hair alone Which thou regardedst fluttering on my neck,**

2. The neck signifies that fortitude whereon, it is said, was fluttering the hair of love, wherewith are interwoven the virtues, and this is love in fortitude. For it suffices not, in order to keep the virtues together, that there be one hair only; it must also be strong, so that no contrary vice may break it in any part of the garland of perfection. For the virtues are bound together by this hair of the love of the soul in such a way that, if it were to break in any place, then, as we have said, they would all be lost; for, where one of the virtues is, there are they all, and likewise, where there is one lacking, they are lacking all. And she says that this hair fluttered upon her neck, because, in the fortitude of the soul—that is, upon the neck of the soul—this love flies toward God with great fortitude and lightness, without being hindered by aught soever. And, even as the breeze stirs the hair and causes it to flutter upon the neck, even so does the breeze of the Holy Spirit move and excite strong love that it may make flights to God; for, without this Divine wind, which moves the faculties to the practice of Divine love, the virtues work not, neither have any effect,<sup>1</sup> although they be in the soul. And, by saying that the Beloved regarded this hair fluttering upon her neck, she signifies how great is the love of God for strong love; for to regard is to behold with particular attention and esteem for that which one beholds, and strong love causes God to turn His eyes often to behold it.<sup>2</sup> She continues thus:<sup>3</sup>

### **Beholding it upon my neck**

3. This the soul says, in order to convey the fact that not alone did God prize and esteem this her love,<sup>4</sup> but likewise that He loved it, when He saw that it was strong; because for God to look<sup>5</sup> is for God to love, even as for God to regard is, as we have said, for Him to esteem that which He regards.<sup>6</sup> And in this line she speaks again of the neck, saying

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'make their effects.'] Bz, 8,654, Gr, Lch, Bj, Md omit 'neither have any effect.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz, 8,654, Gr, Lch, Bj, Md read: '... how great is the love of God for love [that is] strong and light in working, for to regard is to behold with particular attention and esteem. Strong love makes God observe greatly.'

<sup>3</sup> In the margin the Saint wrote: 'when love is weak, He beholds not the neck.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz, 8,654, Gr, Md: 'her strong love.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz, 8,654, Bj, Gr, Lch, Md: 'because the look of God.'

<sup>6</sup> Bz, 8,654, Gr, Lch, Bj, Md: 'even as the regarding of God is [His] estimating of the worth that there is in things and observing of it.'

of the hair, 'Thou didst behold it upon my neck,' because, as has been said, that is the cause of His loving her so greatly, namely that He saw her in her fortitude, so that it is as if she had said: Thou didst love it when Thou didst see that it was strong, without weakness and fear, and alone, without any other love, fluttering with lightness and fervour. Whence it follows that

**Thou wert captivated,**

4. Oh, thing that art worthy of all acceptance<sup>1</sup> and joy, that God should be captivated by a hair! The cause of this so precious capture is that He stopped to behold (which is, as we have said, to love) this our lowly being. For if He, in His great mercy, had not first beheld us and loved us, as Saint John<sup>2</sup> says, and humbled Himself, He would never have been captivated by the fluttering of the hair<sup>3</sup> of our lowly love, since this love could not soar so high as to attain to the capture of this Divine Bird of the heights. But since He humbled Himself to look upon us and to incite us to fly upward ever higher, and thus gave worth to our love, He Himself was taken captive by this hair in its flight—that is, He Himself was glad and pleased and for that reason was captivated. This is the meaning of the phrase 'Beholding it upon my neck, Thou wert captivated'—and thus it is a credible thing that a bird of lowly flight may capture a royal eagle flying high, if the eagle descends to its lowliness, desiring to be caught.

**And wert wounded by one of mine eyes.**

5. By the eye is here understood faith. She says by 'one' of them alone, and that He was 'wounded' by it, because if the faith and fidelity of the soul toward God were not alone, but were mingled with respect or courtesy to some other, she would not succeed in wounding God by love. Wherefore it must be by but one eye alone that the Beloved is wounded, even as it is by one hair alone that He is taken captive. And the love wherewith the Spouse is taken captive by the Bride in this singleness and fidelity that He sees in her is so intimate that, if He was taken captive by the hair of her love, by the eye of her faith His captivity is made closer with so fast a knot that there is inflicted upon Him a wound of love, through the great tenderness of the

<sup>1</sup> Br: 'action.'

<sup>2</sup> The MSS. and Br have 'Saint Paul.' [The reference seems to be to the preceding clause, i.e., to 1 St. John iv, 19. But if it were to the following clause, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians ii, 7 would be intended. This is no doubt the cause of the confusion.]

<sup>3</sup> V, Vd, Br: 'neck.'

affection wherewith He loves her, and she enters<sup>1</sup> into His love the more deeply.

6. This same figure of the hair and of the eye is used by the Spouse in the Songs, where He speaks with the Bride, saying: 'Thou hast wounded My heart, My sister; thou hast wounded My heart with one of thine eyes and with one hair of thy neck.'<sup>2</sup> Herein He twice declares that she has wounded His heart—namely, with the eye and with the hair. Wherefore the soul in this stanza describes these two things, as thanking the Beloved and acknowledging so great a favour, and likewise that she may rejoice and delight in having been so happy as to have found grace with her Beloved, all of which she attributes to Him in the following stanza, saying:

### STANZA XXIII

**When thou didst look on<sup>3</sup> me, Thine eyes imprinted upon me  
thy grace;<sup>4</sup>  
For this cause didst thou love me greatly, Whereby mine eyes  
deserved to adore that which they saw in thee.**

### EXPOSITION

**I**T is the property of perfect love to be unwilling to accept or take naught for itself, and to attribute naught to itself, but all things to the Beloved. This is so even with our lower love—how much more, then, with love for God, which reason so urgently requires of us! Wherefore, since in the last two stanzas the Bride appears to have been attributing something to herself, as where she has said that she will make garlands together with the Spouse, and that they will be interwoven with a hair of her head, which is work of no small moment and esteem; and since afterwards she declares, exultingly, that the Spouse has been taken captive by this hair and wounded by<sup>5</sup> her eye, wherein likewise she appears to be attributing to herself great deserving; now in the present stanza she desires to explain her meaning and to correct an erroneous conclusion which might be drawn from this, for she is

<sup>1</sup> The Saint substitutes, in a marginal note, 'and He brings her'—a reading not found in the MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Canticles iv, 9. [The Spanish, in both phrases, has *en* ('in') for 'with.']

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. p. 28, n. 5, above.]

<sup>4</sup> See p. 28, n. 6, above. In this place the usual reading is 'their grace,' except in Lch, G, V, Md.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'in'; and so in the following paragraphs.]

apprehensive and fearful that some worth and merit will be attributed to her, and that for that reason<sup>1</sup> there will be attributed to God less than that which is His due and than that which she desires. So she attributes it all to Him, and at the same time gives Him thanks for it, saying to Him that the reason for His being taken captive by the hair of her love and wounded by the eye of her faith is that He has granted her the favour of looking upon her with love, and of thus making her graceful and pleasing in His sight; and that through this grace<sup>2</sup> and worth which she has received of Him she has merited His love,<sup>3</sup> and has now in herself become worthy to adore her Beloved pleasingly and to do works worthy of His grace<sup>4</sup> and love. The stanza continues:

**When thou didst look on me,**

2. That is to say, with affection of love, for we have already said that for God to look signifies here for God to love.

**Thine eyes imprinted upon me thy grace;<sup>5</sup>**

3. By the eyes of the Spouse is here understood His merciful Divinity, which, turning in mercy to the soul, imprints upon her and infuses in her His love and grace, beautifying her thereby and raising her up so as to make her the consort of His own Divinity. And, seeing the dignity and height wherein God has set her, the soul says:

**For this cause didst thou love me greatly,**

4. To love greatly<sup>6</sup> is more than to love simply: it is, as it were, to love doubly—that is, for two motives or causes. And thus in this line the soul describes the two motives and causes for love which He has towards her; for the which not only did He love her when He was taken captive by her hair, but He loved her greatly when He was wounded by her eye. And she says in this line that the reason for which He loved her so greatly and so intimately was that, when He looked upon her, He desired to grant her grace that He might be pleased with her, that she might give Him her love—that is, the hair—and that, by

<sup>1</sup> Br omits the words 'some worth . . . for that reason.'

<sup>2</sup> Br: 'greatness.'

<sup>3</sup> Br has [a small change (*creció* for *mereció*) which makes the phrase read:] 'her love has grown.'

<sup>4</sup> Br: 'greatness.'

<sup>5</sup> See p. 118, n. 4. Here Md also reads: 'their grace,' and only G, Lch, V, Vd read 'thy grace.'

<sup>6</sup> [In the original 'love greatly' is represented by a compound verb, *adamar*, and the sentence begins by defining it: *adamar es amar mucho*.]

means of His charity, He might form faith in her, which is her eye. And thus she says: 'For this cause didst Thou love me greatly.' Because for God to set His grace in the soul is for Him to make her worthy and capable of His love; and thus it is as if she had said: Since Thou hadst set Thy grace in me, giving me pledges worthy of Thy love, therefore didst Thou love me greatly—that is, for that reason didst Thou give me more grace. This is that which is said by Saint John: *Dat gratiam pro gratia*.<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: He gives grace for the grace that He has given, which is to give more grace; for without His grace it is impossible to merit His grace.

5. For the understanding of this it is to be noted that, even as God loves naught apart from Himself,<sup>2</sup> even so He loves naught in a lower way than He loves Himself;<sup>3</sup> for He loves all things with respect to Himself and love has the final reason; thus He loves not things for that which they are in themselves: Wherefore for God to love the soul is for Him to set it, after a certain manner, in Himself, making it equal to Himself, and thus He loves the soul in Himself with the same love wherewith He loves Himself. Wherefore, in each of its acts, the soul merits the love of God, because, set as it is in this grace and in this lofty place, it merits God Himself in its every act. Wherefore the next line continues:

**Whereby mine eyes deserved<sup>4</sup> . . .**

6. In that favour and grace which the eyes of Thy mercy wrought in me so as to raise me to love of Thee, mine eyes found worth and became deserving

**. . . to adore that which they saw in thee.**

7. This is as much as to say: The faculties of my soul, O my Spouse, have deserved to rise and look upon Thee, though aforetime, with the wretchedness of their base works and possessions, they had fallen and were very low. For that the soul should be able to look upon God is that it should do works in the grace of God; and the eyes of the soul have had merit in adoration because they have adored in the grace of their God.<sup>5</sup> Enlightened and raised up as they are by His grace and favour,

<sup>1</sup> St. John i, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Md adds: 'but with respect to Himself.'

<sup>3</sup> Bj, Bz add: 'that is, with less love than for Himself.'

<sup>4</sup> [The original omits 'mine eyes' and adds it to the next line, where it occurs in the original of the stanza.]

<sup>5</sup> Br: 'in the greatness of God.'

they have adored that which they have already seen in Him, and which they saw not aforetime by reason of their blindness and wretchedness. What, then, was it that they had already seen? They had seen greatness of virtues, abundance of sweetness, immense goodness, love and mercy in Him, numberless benefits which the soul has received of Him, both when it was in grace and when it was not so. All this the eyes of the soul have now deserved to adore meritoriously, because they are now full of grace. Before this they deserved neither to adore Him, nor to see Him, nor even to consider Him, for great is the<sup>1</sup> grossness and blindness of the soul that is without grace.

STANZA XXIV<sup>2</sup>

**Despise me not, For, if thou didst find me swarthy,  
Now canst thou indeed look upon me, Since thou didst look  
upon me and leave in me grace and beauty.**

## EXPOSITION

**T**HE Bride now takes courage; and, esteeming herself with respect to the pledges and the reward which she has of her Beloved (seeing that, since these things come from Him, though she of herself is of little worth and merits no esteem, she merits to be esteemed because of them), makes bold to speak to her Beloved, begging Him not to despise her or hold her of no worth, since, if she once merited this by reason of the baseness<sup>3</sup> of her fault and the wretchedness of her nature, now, since first He looked upon her and adorned her with His grace and clothed her with His beauty, He may well look upon her for the second time, and many times more, and increase her grace and beauty, since there is reason and cause sufficient for this in His having looked upon her when she merited it not neither had the means of doing so.

**Despise me not,**

2. As though she had said: Since this is so, do Thou not hold me as of little worth.

**For, if thou didst find me swarthy,**

<sup>1</sup> Br: 'for it is greatness' of.'

<sup>2</sup> [For the version of this chapter in the Granada group of MSS. see Appendix, pp. 400-2.]

<sup>3</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'blindness.'

3. For if, ere Thou lookedst upon me, Thou didst find in me baseness of faults and imperfections and wretchedness as to my condition by nature,

**Now canst thou indeed look upon me, Since thou didst look upon me**

4. Since Thou didst look upon me, and take from me that miserable swarthy colour wherewith I was not fit to be seen, now canst Thou look upon me indeed, again and again; since not alone didst Thou take from me my swarthiness when first Thou lookedst upon me, but likewise Thou didst make me worthier to be seen, since with Thy look of love Thou didst

**Leave in me grace and beauty.**

5. Greatly is God pleased with the soul to whom He has given His grace, since He abides, well pleased, within her (which He was not wont to do before He gave it to her), and she is exalted and honoured by Him. For this cause He loves her with an ineffable love, and communicates to her ever more love in all her affections<sup>1</sup> and works; for the soul that has reached a high estate of love and is honoured in God's sight attains ever to more love and more honour from God, even as in the words of Saint John which we have quoted: *Dat gratiam pro gratia*.<sup>2</sup> And this God declares in speaking with Jacob His friend in the Book of Isaías,<sup>3</sup> saying: *Ex quo honorabilis factus es in oculis meis, et gloriosus, ego dilexi te*.<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: Since thou hast become honourable and glorious in Mine eyes, I have loved thee. Which is as much as to say: Since Mine eyes gave thee grace when first they looked upon thee, for which cause thou didst become honourable and glorious in My presence, thou hast merited more grace from My favours. The Bride speaks similarly to the daughters of Jerusalem in the Divine Songs, saying: *Nigra sum sed formosa filia Jerusalem, ideo dilexit me rex et introduxit me in cubiculum suum*.<sup>5</sup> Which is to say: I am swarthy, daughters of Jerusalem, but I am beautiful; wherefore the King has loved me and brought me into the interior of his bed. Which is as though she were to say: Daughters of Jerusalem, marvel not because the King of Heaven has wrought in me such great favours, bringing

<sup>1</sup> The Saint corrects 'effects' (*efectos*) to 'affections' (*afectos*). The former reading is found in G, V, Vd, Br. The words 'more love' are also added by the Saint and do not occur in G, V, Vd, Br.

<sup>2</sup> St. John i, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Isaías xliii, 4.

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'through Isaías.']

<sup>5</sup> Canticles i, 4.

me into the interior of His bed, for, though of myself I am swarthy, for which cause I merited them not, I am made beautiful through Him, since He has looked upon me and as a result has loved me.<sup>1</sup>

6. Well, my God, canst Thou now look upon that soul on whom Thou lookedst once, and greatly canst Thou prize her, since with Thy first look Thou didst leave pledges with her, so that, not once alone, but many times, she merits the gaze of Thy Divine eyes; for, as is said in the Book of Esther: *Hoc honore condignus est quemcumque rex voluerit honorare.*<sup>2</sup>

STANZA XXV<sup>3</sup>

**Catch us the foxes, For our vineyard is now in flower,  
While we make a bunch<sup>4</sup> of roses, And let none appear upon  
the hill.**

## EXPOSITION

**T**HE Bride, seeing that the virtues of her soul have now reached the point of perfection, so that she is now enjoying their delight and sweetness and fragrance, even as one enjoys the sight and fragrance of plants when they are in full flower, longs to continue this sweetness and desires that there may be naught to hinder her from so doing. In this stanza, therefore, she begs the angels and ministers of God to agree to keep from her all such things as may tear down and crumple<sup>5</sup> the said flower and fragrance of her virtues—as, for example, all the disturbances, temptations, causes of unrest, desires (if any remain<sup>6</sup>), imaginations and other motions, whether natural or spiritual, to which she here gives the name of foxes, which are wont to keep from the soul the flower of inward sweetness and quiet and peace, at the time when the soul in her virtues is most contentedly enjoying it, together with her Beloved. For the soul is wont at times to see in her spirit all the virtues which God has given to her (when He gives her

<sup>1</sup> The Saint here adds a marginal note: *Omni habenti dabitur*. See p. 351, below.

<sup>2</sup> Esther vi, 11.

<sup>3</sup> [For the version of this chapter in the Granada group of MSS., see Appendix, pp. 402-4, below.]

<sup>4</sup> [The word translated 'bunch' and 'nosegay' in this chapter is *piña*, which means literally a pine-cone, or a cone-shaped cluster; the significance of this will be seen in § 5, below.]

<sup>5</sup> [*ajar.*] Br has: [*aojar*] 'bewitch.'

<sup>6</sup> This parenthesis is inserted by the Saint as an interlinear note, and is not copied by G, V, Vd, Br.

that light), and then with wondrous delight and fragrance of love she gathers them all together and offers them to the Beloved as it were a bunch of flowers<sup>1</sup> (and the greater is her love, the larger is the bunch).<sup>2</sup> In accepting them—and accept them indeed He does—the Beloved at the same time accepts a great service; for together with the virtues the soul offers herself, which is the greatest service that she can render Him; and this delight that the soul receives from this kind of gift which she makes to the Beloved is one of the greatest delights that she is wont to receive in her intercourse with God. Thus the Bride desires that naught may keep her from this inward delight, which is the flowering vineyard, and desires that not only may these things aforementioned be taken from her, but that likewise she may be withdrawn far from all things, so that in all her exterior and interior desires and faculties there may be no form or image or other such thing to appear and present itself before the soul and the Beloved, who, withdrawn from all else and united with each other, are making this nosegay and having joy therein.

**Catch us the foxes, For our vineyard is now in flower,**

2. The vineyard is the nursery of all the virtues, which is in the soul and which gives to the soul a wine of sweet savour. This vineyard of the soul is flowering when the soul is united with the Spouse according to the will and in the same Spouse is rejoicing and delighting itself in all these virtues together. At this season there are wont to resort to the memory and fancy, at certain times, many and various forms and imaginations, and to the sensual part of the soul many and various motions and desires which, as we have said, by their great subtlety and agility, trouble the soul and cause it to lose that inward tranquillity and sweetness wherein it was rejoicing. And besides this the evil spirits, who are very envious of the inward recollection and peace of the soul, are wont to introduce into the spirit horrors and disturbances and fears. All these things the Bride here calls foxes, for even as the shrewd and agile little foxes, with their subtle bounds, are in the habit of tearing down and ruining the blossom of the vineyards at the season when they are in flower, even so do the shrewd and malicious evil spirits, with like speed, by means of these disturbances and motions aforementioned, assail the devotion of holy souls.

3. This same request is made by the Bride in the Songs, where she says: *Capite nobis vulpes parvulas, quæ demoliuntur vineas: nam vinea*

<sup>1</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'roses.'

<sup>2</sup> The parenthesis is added by the Saint.

*nostra floruit.*<sup>1</sup> Which is to say: Drive us away the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyard is flowering. And not for that reason alone does the soul desire them to be driven away, but likewise so that there may be room for that whereof she speaks in the line following.<sup>2</sup> Namely:

**While we make a bunch of roses,**

4. For at this season, when the soul is enjoying the flower of this vineyard and taking her delight upon the breast of her Beloved, it comes to pass that the virtues of the soul stand out clearly to view, as we have said, and are at their best, revealing themselves to her and bestowing upon her great sweetness and delight. These virtues the soul feels to be in herself and in God, so that they seem to her to be a pleasant vineyard, full of flower, belonging to them both, wherein both of them pasture and have delight. Then the soul gathers together all these virtues, and in each one of them and in all of them together makes most delectable acts of love. All these she offers to the Beloved with great tenderness of love and sweetness; and the Beloved Himself aids her herein, for without His favour and aid she could not thus gather together the virtues and offer them to her Beloved. Wherefore she says: 'We make a nosegay,'—that is to say, the Beloved and I.

5. She calls this gathering together of virtues a cone or nosegay,<sup>3</sup> because even as a pine-cone<sup>4</sup> is strong,<sup>5</sup> and contains within itself many pieces, strong and strongly bound together, which are the pine-kernels, even so this cone or nosegay of virtues which the soul makes for her Beloved is one single piece of the soul's perfection, which firmly and in an ordered manner embraces and contains within itself many perfections and virtues which are very strong, and gifts which are very precious, for all the perfections and virtues and gifts are ordered and combined into one firm perfection of the soul. Inasmuch as this perfection is being formed through the practice of the virtues, and, when formed, is being offered to the Beloved by the soul in the spirit of love after the manner which we are describing, it is fitting that the foxes aforementioned be driven away so that they hinder not the said interior communication between the two. And not only does the soul in this stanza make this request that she may be able to fashion the nosegay

<sup>1</sup> Canticles ii, 15.

<sup>2</sup> 'Why does it say the flower of the vineyard and not the fruit?' queries the Saint in a marginal note.

<sup>3</sup> [By 'cone or nosegay' understand *piña*, and see p. 123, n. 4, above.]

<sup>4</sup> [*piña*.]

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'a strong piece.' Cf. the following clause.]

well, but likewise she desires that which ensues in the line following. Namely:

**And let none appear upon the hill.**

6. This Divine interior exercise also requires withdrawal and detachment from all things that might present themselves to the soul, whether from the lower part of a man, which is that of the senses, or from the higher part, which is that of the reason, in the which two parts are comprised the entire harmony of the faculties and senses of the whole man, which harmony the Bride here calls a hill, and begs that none may appear thereon, that is to say, naught that pertains to any of these faculties or senses whereof we have spoken. It is thus as though she were to say: In all the spiritual faculties—namely, the understanding, the memory and the will—let there be no other considerations or affections or digressions; and in all the senses and faculties of the body, such as the imagination and the fancy, and the five exterior senses, let there be no other forms, images or figures of any natural objects or operations.

7. This the soul says here, since at this season of communication with God it is fitting that all the senses, whether interior or exterior, be empty and idle, for, at such a time, the more they set themselves to work, the more they disturb the soul. For, when the soul attains to interior union with God, the spiritual faculties no longer work in it, still less do the bodily faculties, inasmuch as the work of the union of love is already done, and thus the faculties have ceased to work, for when they reach their goal all medial operations come to an end. Thus that which the soul does at this time in the Beloved is to remain in the delectable<sup>1</sup> exercise of that which has already been wrought in it—namely, loving in continuation of the union of love. Let none, then, appear upon the hill; let the will alone be present in the surrender of itself and of all the virtues to the Beloved after the manner aforementioned.

<sup>1</sup> This word is added by the Saint and is not copied by G, V, Vd, Br.

## STANZA XXVI

**Stay thee, dead north wind. Come, south wind, that awakenest love;  
Breathe through my garden and let its odours flow, And the  
Beloved shall pasture<sup>1</sup> among the flowers.**

## EXPOSITION

**O**VER and above the causes already mentioned, spiritual dryness might be a cause whereby in the Bride-Soul the inward sweetness and substance<sup>2</sup> whereof we have spoken above might be quenched. Fearing<sup>3</sup> this, she does two things in this stanza. First, she shuts the door upon spiritual dryness, taking care not to become neglectful in devotion and so allow it to enter. The second thing that she does is to invoke the Holy Spirit, sustaining herself by means of prayer, so that by this means not only may dryness be kept without, but likewise<sup>4</sup> her devotion may be increased and she may put the virtues into practice<sup>5</sup> interiorly—all this to the end that her Beloved may have greater rejoicing and delight in them.

**Stay thee, dead north wind.**

2. The north wind is a cold and dry wind, and withers<sup>6</sup> the flowers; and because spiritual dryness<sup>7</sup> causes this same effect in the soul wherein it dwells, she calls it 'north wind'; and 'dead,' because it quenches and kills spiritual sweetness and substance;<sup>8</sup> because of the effect which it produces, she calls it 'dead north wind.' Desiring to maintain herself in the sweetness of her love, the Bride commands this dryness to stay itself: by this is to be understood that she takes care to do such things as may stay it, preserving and keeping the soul from aught that may arouse it.

**Come, south wind, that awakenest love;**

<sup>1</sup> See p. 28, n. 9. Here both G and V have: 'And let the Beloved appear . . .' while Vd has: 'And the Beloved shall appear . . .' (*parecerd*).

<sup>2</sup> [*jugo*, the sap or pith of a plant.]

<sup>3</sup> Gr, V, Vd, Br and Sanlúcar read, for *temiendo* ('fearing'), *teniendo* ('having').

<sup>4</sup> Bj omits 'not only . . . likewise.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz, Bj, G, V, Vd, Br: 'execution.'

<sup>6</sup> G, V, Vd, Md: 'a cold wind, and dries up and withers.'; Lch: 'which dries up and withers.'

<sup>7</sup> In the margin the Saint has added: 'The cause of this dryness is that the soul can do naught with its facilities until the Beloved moves them, putting them into actual practice.' [This sentence is reconstructed with some difficulty, the MS. not being clear.]

<sup>8</sup> [*jugo*.]

3. The south wind<sup>1</sup> is another wind, which is commonly<sup>2</sup> called *ábrego*; this is a peaceful breeze, which brings rain and makes grass and plants<sup>3</sup> to grow and flowers to open and scatter their fragrance; its effects are contrary to those of the north wind. And thus by this breeze the soul here denotes the Holy Spirit, Who, as she says, awakens love; for, when this Divine breeze assails the soul, it enkindles it wholly and refreshes it and revives it and awakens the will and up-raises the desires which aforetime had fallen and were asleep, to the love of God, in such manner that it may well be said thereof that it awakens the love both of the Spouse and of the Bride.<sup>4</sup>

### Breathe through my garden

4. We have said that the soul of the Bride is the vineyard flowering in virtues; she<sup>5</sup> now likewise calls it here a garden, wherein are planted the flowers of perfections and virtues whereof we have spoken. And here it is to be noted that the Bride says not: 'Breathe in my garden,' but 'Breathe through my garden'; for there is a great difference between the breathing of God into the soul and the breathing of God through the soul. To breathe<sup>6</sup> into the soul is to infuse into it grace, gifts and virtues; and to breathe through the soul is for God to touch the virtues and perfections which have already been given to it, refreshing them and moving them so that they may diffuse wondrous fragrance and sweetness. This is just as when aromatic<sup>7</sup> spices are shaken; for, as soon as they are set in motion, they shed the abundance of their odour, which formerly was not present, or was not perceived to so high a degree. For the virtues that the soul has acquired in itself it is not always actually feeling and enjoying; because, as we have said, they are present in the soul during this life like flowers enclosed in the bud, or like aromatic spices covered over, the fragrance whereof is not perceived until they are uncovered and shaken, as we have said.

5. But at times God grants to the Bride-Soul such favours that, breathing with His Divine Spirit through this her flowering garden, He opens all these buds, or virtues, and uncovers these aromatic spices

<sup>1</sup> [He uses the learned word *Austro*; *ábrego* is a popular word, meaning a south-west wind.]

<sup>2</sup> Bz, 8,654, Md: 'which in the vulgar tongue is . . .'

<sup>3</sup> Gr, Lch, Bj, Bz, 8,654, Md omit 'and plants.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'of Him and of her.7] These words are added by the Saint and are not copied by the MSS.

<sup>5</sup> Gr, Lch, Bj, Bz, 8,654, Md: 'the Bride.'

<sup>6</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'For God to breathe.'

<sup>7</sup> The Saint's correction for 'Sarmatic,' an evident slip of the copyist.

which are the gifts and perfections and riches of the soul, and, by opening this inward wealth and treasure, reveals all her beauty. And then it is a wondrous thing to see, and sweet to feel, the riches of the gifts which are revealed to the soul and the beauty of these flowers of the virtues<sup>1</sup> which are now all opened, each one diffusing the fragrance and sweetness which belongs to it. And this the Bride calls the flowing of the odours, as she says in the line following:

**And let its odours flow,**

6. These odours are at times so abundant that the soul thinks herself to be clothed with delights and bathed in inestimable glory—so much so that not only is she conscious of them within, but they are also wont to overflow without, to such an extent that all who are able to discern such things recognize it, and the soul in this case seems to them to be like a delectable garden, full of the delights and riches of God. And not only when these flowers are opened<sup>2</sup> can this be observed in these holy souls, but they bear within them habitually something<sup>3</sup> of greatness and dignity which causes others to stop and respect them by reason of the supernatural effect produced in them through their close and familiar intercourse with God, even as it is written of Moses, in the Book of Exodus, that they could not look upon his countenance by reason of the glory and honour which remained upon his person because he had spoken with God face to face.<sup>4</sup>

7. In this breathing of the Holy Spirit through the soul, which is His visitation of her in love, the Spouse, Who is the Son of God, communicates Himself to her after a lofty manner. To this end He first sends His Spirit, Who is His forerunner, as He did to the Apostles, to prepare for Him a dwelling for the soul His Bride, raising her up in delight, setting her garden in order, causing its flowers to open, revealing its gifts, and adorning her with the tapestry of His graces and riches. And thus with great desire the Bride-Soul desires all this—namely, that the north wind may depart, that the south wind may come and that it may breathe through the garden, for herein the soul gains many things together. She gains the fruition of the virtues which have been brought to the highest point of delectable exercise, as we have said. She gains the fruition of the Beloved in them, since by their

<sup>1</sup> Md omits 'of the virtues.'

<sup>2</sup> From this point Lch omits a long passage, including the rest of this paragraph and the first half of the next, down to the words: 'He communicates Himself to her after a loftier manner.'

<sup>3</sup> [un no sé qué. Cf. p. 52, n. 2, above.]

<sup>4</sup> Exodus xxxiv, 30.

means, as we have just said, He communicates Himself to her after a loftier manner and grants her more special favours than before. She also gains this, that the Beloved delights in her far more through this exercise of the virtues, and it is this that pleases her most, namely that her Beloved is pleased with her. She also gains the continuance and duration of this fragrance and sweetness of the virtues, which continues in the soul for as long as the Beloved is present after this manner, and the Bride is giving Him sweetness in her virtues, even as she says in the Songs, after this wise: *Cum esset Rex in accubitu suo, nardus mea dedit odorem suavitatis*.<sup>1</sup> This is as though she were to say: While the King was reclining in his reclining-chamber, which is my soul, my fragrant little tree gave forth fragrance of sweetness. By the fragrant little tree, which consists of many flowers, she here understands the nursery of many virtues which was said above to be in the soul, and which there she calls a flowering vineyard, or the nosegay of flowers which was spoken of later; and thus this tree gives forth the sweetness of its fragrance to God and to the soul, for as long as He dwells in her through communication of substance.

8. Wherefore it is greatly to be desired that every soul should pray for this breath of the Holy Spirit to breathe through its garden and for the flowing of its Divine odours. And because this is so necessary, and of such great good and glory for the soul, the Bride desired it in the Songs, and prayed for it, saying: *Surge Aquilo, et veni Auster, perfla hortum meum, et fluent aromata illius*.<sup>2</sup> This includes all that we have said in this stanza down to this point, and signifies: Rise up, north wind, and depart, and thou, south-west wind,<sup>3</sup> sweet and profitable wind, come and flow and breathe through my garden; and its fragrant and precious spices shall flow. And all this the soul desires, not for the delight and glory which come to her thereby, but because she knows that her Spouse delights therein. This is her preparation and prediction, that her Beloved Spouse, the Son of God, may come and take His delight in her; wherefore she says next:

### **And the Beloved shall pasture<sup>4</sup> among the flowers.**

9. The soul here refers to this delight that the Son of God has in her at this time, and she gives it the name of pasture, which describes it with the greatest fitness, since pasturing or feeding is a thing that gives not only pleasure, but likewise sustenance; and even so the Son

<sup>1</sup> Canticles i, 11 [A.V., i, 12].

<sup>3</sup> [*abrego*.]

<sup>2</sup> Canticles iv, 16.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 28, n. 9, above.

of God delights in the soul, and in these the soul's delights, and takes sustenance from her—that is, He continues in her, as in a place wherein He has great delight, since the place itself truly delights in Him. And it is this, as I understand, that He Himself meant, when He said, through the mouth of Solomon, in the Proverbs: 'My delights are with the sons of men'<sup>1</sup>—that is to say, when their delights are to be with Me, Who am the Son of God. And it is to be noted that she says not that He will pasture 'upon' the flowers, but 'among' the flowers; for the communication of the Spouse, and His delight, is in the soul, by means of the adornment of the virtues aforementioned. And it is upon the soul itself that He pastures, transforming it into Himself, when it is seasoned and prepared and made fragrant<sup>2</sup> with the flowers of virtues and gifts and perfections, which are the things<sup>3</sup> whereby and among which He pastures upon the soul. These things, by the power of His forerunner aforementioned, are rendering the soul pleasing and sweet to God; and this is the habit of the Spouse, to pasture upon the soul amid the fragrance of these flowers. And thus the Bride in the Songs, as one who well knows this habit of the Spouse, speaks in these words: *Dilectus meus descendit in hortum suum ad areolam aromatum, ut pascatur in hortis, et lilia colligat*.<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: My Beloved is gone down into His garden, to the beds and breezes<sup>5</sup> of the fragrant aromatic spices, to pasture in the gardens and to gather lilies for Himself.<sup>6</sup> And then she says: 'I for my Beloved, and my Beloved for me: He feedeth among the lilies.'<sup>7</sup> That is to say: He delights in my soul, which is the garden, among the lilies of my virtues and perfections and graces.

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs viii, 31.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'seasoned and dressed and salted'—the metaphor of feeding is carried into the kitchen and developed in more detail than is possible in English.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the sauce'.]

<sup>4</sup> Canticles vi, 1 [A.V., vi, 2-3].

<sup>5</sup> [The Spanish has the singular form with plural meaning.]

<sup>6</sup> Md omits 'aromatic,' and ends: 'to pasture on the lilies and to gather them for Himself.' Bz, 8,654, Bj, Lch, Gr are practically identical with Md.

<sup>7</sup> Canticles vi, 2 [A.V., vi, 3].

## STANZA XXVII

**The Bride has entered Into the pleasant garden of her desire,<sup>1</sup>  
And at her pleasure rests, Her neck reclining on the gentle  
arms of the Beloved.**

## EXPOSITION

**T**HE soul having now done all in her power that the foxes may be driven away and the north wind may depart, since these have been hindrances and inconveniences impeding the perfect delight of the estate of the Spiritual Marriage; and having likewise invoked and obtained the breeze of the Holy Spirit (as has been described in the two preceding stanzas), which is the proper disposition and means for the perfection of this estate: it now remains to treat, in this stanza, of this estate, wherein the Spouse now speaks to the soul, calling her His Bride, and says two things. He says, first, that the soul, having issued forth victoriously, has now attained to this delectable estate of the Spiritual Marriage which both He and she had so greatly desired.<sup>2</sup> The second thing that He does is to enumerate the properties of the said estate, of which properties the soul now has fruition in Him, and these are for her to rest at her pleasure and for her neck to recline upon the gentle arms of the Beloved, even as we shall now go on to show in our exposition.

**The Bride has entered**

2. In order that we may expound the arrangement of these stanzas the more clearly, and describe the soul's habitual progress ere it come to this estate of the Spiritual Marriage, which is the highest estate that, with the help of God, we have now to describe, and to which the soul has now come, it is to be noted that first of all it exercised itself in the trials and bitternesses of mortification, and in meditation,<sup>3</sup> as the soul said at the beginning, from the first stanza down to that which says: 'Scattering a thousand graces.'<sup>4</sup> Afterwards it passed through the pains and straits of love which have been described in the stanzas following, as far as that which says: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'pleasant desired garden.']

<sup>2</sup> The MSS., Br and Md have: 'which she had so greatly desired.' The addition of 'both He and' was made by the Saint.

<sup>3</sup> These three words are an addition by the Saint.

<sup>4</sup> [Stanza V.]

<sup>5</sup> [Stanza XII.]

And in addition to this, the soul then relates how it has received great communications and many visits from its Beloved, wherein it has reached ever-increasing perfection and knowledge in His love, so much so that, passing beyond all things, and even beyond itself, it has surrendered itself to Him through union of love in the Spiritual Betrothal, wherein, as one that is now betrothed, it has received from the Spouse great gifts and jewels, even as it has described in its song, from the stanza wherein this Divine betrothal was made, and which says, 'Withdraw them, Beloved,'<sup>1</sup> a spiritual [estate] the properties whereof it has been describing, down to this place, wherein the Spouse makes mention of it; wherefore its properties are being described down to this present place, which begins 'The Bride has entered. . . .' It now remains for the Spouse to make mention of the said Spiritual Marriage<sup>2</sup> between the soul aforementioned and the Son of God, her Spouse, which is far greater than the Betrothal because it is a total transformation in the Beloved (and thus I think that this estate is never without confirmation in grace, because the faithfulness of both is confirmed, that of the soul being confirmed in God),<sup>3</sup> wherein on either side there is made surrender, by total possession, of the one to the other in consummate union of love, as far as may be in this life, wherein the soul is made Divine and becomes God by participation, in so far as may be in this life, and thus this is the highest estate which in this life is attainable. For, even as in the consummation of marriage according to the flesh the two become one flesh, as says the Divine Scripture,<sup>4</sup> even so, when this Spiritual Marriage between God and the soul is consummated, there are two natures in one spirit and love of God. It is as when<sup>5</sup> the light of the star or of the candle is joined and united with the sun, so that that which shines is not the star or the candle but the sun, which has absorbed the other lights in itself.<sup>6</sup> And of this estate the Spouse treats in the present line, saying: 'The Bride has entered'—that is to say, has gone out from all that is temporal and from all that is natural,

<sup>1</sup> Here there is a marginal addition by the Saint, the first line of which has been completely cut off. The remainder is represented by the words ('a spiritual . . . down to this present place') which immediately follow.

<sup>2</sup> The Saint's emendation for 'It has remained now for the Spiritual Marriage to come to pass. . . .' The MSS. do not copy this emendation.

<sup>3</sup> The bracketed parenthesis is a marginal addition made by the Saint. The words 'that of the soul,' 'in' [God] are conjectural; [were they omitted we should read: 'that of God being confirmed'—i.e. in the soul.]

<sup>4</sup> Genesis ii, 24.

<sup>5</sup> 'When' is the Saint's addition, found also in Bj.

<sup>6</sup> Md reads: '. . . or of the candle in the presence of the sun is joined and united with that of the sun, so that that which shines and absorbs the other lights in itself is the sun.' Bz, Lch, 8,654, Gr, Bj read similarly, but have 'united with it' for 'united with the sun.'

and from all spiritual manners and modes and affections, and, having left behind and forgotten all temptations, disturbances, griefs, anxiety<sup>1</sup> and cares, is transformed in this sublime embrace.<sup>2</sup> Of this the following line goes on to treat, namely:

**Into the pleasant garden of her desire,**

3. This is as though she were to say: She has been transformed in God, Who it is that is here called a pleasant garden, by reason of the delectable and sweet repose which the soul finds in Him. The soul does not come to this garden of complete transformation (which is the joy and delight and glory of the Spiritual Marriage) without first passing through the Spiritual Betrothal and through the mutual and loyal love of those that are betrothed. For, after the soul has been for some time the Bride of the Son of God, in love which is sweet and perfect, God calls her and sets her in this His flowering garden for the consummation of this most happy estate of marriage with Him, wherein is effected such union of the two natures and such communication of the Divine nature to the human, that, while neither of them changes its being, each of them appears to be God. Although in this life this thing cannot come to pass perfectly, yet it surpasses everything that can be described or conceived.

4. This is very clearly expressed by the Spouse Himself in the Songs, where He invites the soul, now made His Bride, to this estate, saying: *Veni in hortum meum soror mea Sponsa, messui myrrham meam cum aromatibus meis.*<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: Come and enter into My garden, My sister, My spouse, for I have now gathered My myrrh with My fragrant spices. He calls her sister and spouse because this she was in the love and surrender of herself which she had made to Him before He called her to this estate of the Spiritual Marriage, where He says that He has now gathered His fragrant myrrh and aromatic spices, which are the fruits of the flowers,<sup>4</sup> now ripe and made ready for the soul, the which fruits are the delights and grandeurs that He Himself communicates to her in this estate—that is, He communicates them to her in Himself;

<sup>1</sup> [This noun, alone of the five, is singular.]

<sup>2</sup> Md (as also, with minute variations not affecting the sense, Bz, Lch, 8,654, Gr, Bj) reads: 'that is to say, from all that is temporal and natural, leaving outside all the temptations, disturbances, cares, anxieties and griefs, and forms and figures [both] corporal and imaginary, taking not advantage of them now as means for this sublime embrace. From all this she has entered.'

<sup>3</sup> Canticles v, 1.

<sup>4</sup> 'Of the flowers' is the Saint's addition, copied only by Bj, of the MSS., and not found in Br or Md.

for the which cause He is to her the pleasant garden of her desire. For the whole desire and aim of the soul, and that of God in all the works of the soul, is the consummation and perfection<sup>1</sup> of this estate, wherefore the soul never rests until she reaches Him; for in this estate she finds much greater abundance and fullness of God, and a peace more sure and stable, and a sweetness more perfect without compare than in the Spiritual Betrothal, since she is now placed in the arms of such a Spouse.<sup>2</sup> Of the soul in this estate is to be understood that which Saint Paul says to the Galatians, in these words: *Vivo autem, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus*.<sup>3</sup> That is: I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Wherefore, since the soul lives a life so happy and blessed as this life of God, let each one consider, if he can, what a life of the soul this will be, wherein neither can God perceive aught that is displeasing to Him, nor does the soul perceive it,<sup>4</sup> but the soul enjoys and perceives the delight and glory of God in its very substance, which is now transformed in Him. Wherefore the stanza continues:

**And at her pleasure rests, Her neck reclining . . .**

5. The neck, as has been said above, denotes strength, for, by means of this strength, which the soul in this estate now possesses, is wrought this union; for the soul is incapable of receiving so close an embrace if it be not strong,<sup>5</sup> which strength is that wherewith the soul works, and practises the virtues, and conquers the vices; wherefore it is just that the soul should take its repose and rest after it has laboured, with its neck reclining

**. . . on the gentle arms of the Beloved.**

6. For the neck to recline on the arms of God is for it to have its strength now united—or rather, its weakness—in the strength of God; for the arms of God signify the strength of God,<sup>6</sup> wherein our weakness, reclining upon Him and transformed in Him, has now strength from God Himself. Wherefore it is very convenient to denote this estate of the Spiritual Marriage by this reclining of the neck on the

<sup>1</sup> Bz, Lch, 8,654, Gr, Bj, Md omit 'and perfection.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Habitual embrace in (God?)': marginal note by the Saint.

<sup>3</sup> Galatians ii, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Bz, Lch, 8,654, Gr, Bj, Md read: 'And therefore, since the soul lives a life so happy, which is the life of God, let it consider, if it can, what a life will be this wherein the soul can now perceive naught that is displeasing, neither does God perceive it.'

<sup>5</sup> The words 'for, by means . . . be not strong' are a marginal note of the Saint's, included almost literally in the second redaction. [See p. 295, below.]

<sup>6</sup> G, V, Vd, 8,654, Br omit this phrase: 'for the arms . . . strength of God.'

gentle arms of the Beloved, since God is now both the strength and the gentleness of the soul, in Whom it is defended and protected from all evils and given the savour of good things. Hence the Bride in the Songs, being desirous of this estate, said to the Spouse: *Quis det te mihi fratrem meum, sugentem ubera matris meæ, ut inveniam te solum foris, et deosculer te, et iam me nemo despiciat?*<sup>1</sup> As though she were to say: Who would give Thee to me, my brother, that Thou mightest suck the breasts of my mother, so that I might find Thee alone without and might kiss Thee, and none would then despise me? By calling Him her brother, she denotes the equality which there is in the betrothal of love between the two before they attain to this estate. By saying 'that Thou mightest suck the breasts of my mother,' she means, that Thou mightest quench and dry up in me the desires and passions, which are the breasts and the milk of Mother Eve in our flesh, and are a hindrance to this estate. And thus, she continues, when this is done, 'I might find Thee alone without'—that is: I might go out from all things, even from myself, in solitude and detachment of spirit, when once the aforementioned desires are dried up; and there I, being alone, 'might kiss Thee,' Who art alone—that is to say: My nature, now that it is alone and detached from all impurity, temporal, natural and spiritual, might be united<sup>2</sup> with Thee alone, with Thy nature alone, and without any other intermediaries,<sup>3</sup> which alone comes to pass in the Spiritual Marriage, which is the kiss of God by the soul, where none despises it or assaults it; for in this estate neither devil nor flesh nor world nor desires molest it. For herein is fulfilled that which is also said in the Canticles: *Iam enim hiems transiit, imber abiit et recessit, flores apparuerunt, etc.*<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: The winter is now past and the rain has gone and the flowers have appeared in our land.

<sup>1</sup> Canticles viii, 1.

<sup>2</sup> G, V, Vd, Br have: *si viniere* ('if it were to come') for *se unire* ('might be united') [an inferior reading which involves some slight alterations in the English context].

<sup>3</sup> Md adds: 'save love.'

<sup>4</sup> Canticles ii, 11-12.

## STANZA XXVIII

**Beneath the apple-tree, There wert thou betrothed to me;  
There did I give thee my hand And thou wert redeemed  
where thy mother had been corrupted.**

## EXPOSITION

**I**N this high estate of the Spiritual Marriage, the Spouse reveals His wondrous secrets to the soul with great readiness and frequency, and describes His works to her, for true and perfect love can keep nothing hidden. And in particular He communicates to her sweet mysteries<sup>1</sup> concerning His Incarnation, and the mode and way of human redemption, which is one of the highest works of God, and is thus most delectable to the soul. And so the Spouse does this in the present stanza, wherein is denoted how with great sweetness of love He reveals inwardly to the soul the mysteries aforementioned. And thus He speaks with her and tells her how by means of the Tree of the Cross she was betrothed to Him; how He gave her herein the favour of His mercy, being pleased to die for her and making her *beauteous*<sup>2</sup> after this manner. For He restored and redeemed her by the same means whereby human nature had been ruined, namely, by means of the Tree of Paradise, in our first mother, who was Eve. Thus the Spouse says:

**Beneath the apple-tree,**

2. Meaning by the apple-tree the Tree of the Cross whereon the Son of God redeemed human nature, and in consequence was betrothed to it, and consequently to every soul, giving to each soul in token thereof grace and pledges through the merits of His Passion. And thus He says to her:

**There wert thou betrothed to me;****There did I give thee my hand**

3. This is to say, the hand of My favour and help, raising thee up from thy miserable and low estate to be My companion and My betrothed.

**And thou wert redeemed where thy mother had been corrupted.**

<sup>1</sup> The Saint corrects the 'matters' of the copy (also found in G, V, Vd, Br) to 'mysteries.'

<sup>2</sup> Many versions read: 'making her *beauteously*.'

4. For thy mother, human nature, was corrupted, in thy first parents, beneath the tree, and there likewise wert thou redeemed—namely, beneath the Tree of the Cross.<sup>1</sup> So that, if thy mother caused thy death beneath the tree, I gave thee life beneath the Tree of the Cross. After this manner God continues to reveal to the soul the ordinances and dispositions of His Wisdom; since He is able so wisely and beautifully to bring good from evil, and to ordain to our greater good that which was the cause of evil. That which is literally contained in this stanza is said by the same Spouse to the Bride in the Songs, where He says: *Sub arbore malo suscitavi te, ibi corrupta est mater tua, ibi violata est genitrix tua.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: Under the apple-tree I raised thee up; there thy mother was corrupted,<sup>3</sup> and there was she violated that bore thee.

## STANZAS XXIX AND XXX

**Birds of swift wing, Lions, harts, leaping does,  
Mountains, valleys, banks, waters, breezes, heats, And terrors  
that keep watch by night,**

**By the pleasant lyres And by the sirens' song, I conjure you,  
Cease your wrath and touch not the wall, That the Bride may  
sleep more securely.**

## EXPOSITION

**T**HE Spouse continues, and, in these two stanzas, describes how, as by means of the pleasant lyres, which here signify the sweetness that is habitually enjoyed in this estate, and likewise by the sirens' song, which signifies the delight that He has ever in the soul, He has just brought to an end and conclusion all the operations and passions of the soul which aforesaid were a certain impediment and hindrance<sup>4</sup> to peaceful pleasure and sweetness. These things, He says here, are the digressions of the imaginative fancy, and He conjures them to cease. Furthermore, He brings into control the two natural faculties, which formerly to some extent afflicted<sup>5</sup> the soul and which are the irascible and the concupiscible. And likewise, by means of these lyres

<sup>1</sup> Canticles viii, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> This is the reading (*estragada*) of Md, and all other authorities than Sanlúcar, Vd. 8, 654, Br (*extratda*, 'drawn forth,' 'removed'), G, V, Lch (*destruida*, 'destroyed').

<sup>4</sup> [*sinsabor*, *lit.*, 'displeasure.']

<sup>5</sup> Lch: 'fatigued.'

and this song, He declares how in this estate, in so far as may be in this life, the three faculties of the soul—understanding, will and memory—are brought to perfection and set in working order. And likewise it is described herein how the four passions of the soul—namely: grief, hope, joy and fear—are mitigated and controlled by means of the satisfaction which the soul possesses, and which is denoted by the pleasant lyres and the sirens' song, as we shall now explain. All these hindrances God desires to cease, so that the soul, at her will and without any interruption, may have fruition of the delight, peace and sweetness of this union.

### **Birds of swift wing,**

2. He calls the digressions of the imagination birds of swift wing, since they are light and subtle in their flight first in one direction and then in another. When the will, in quietness, is enjoying the delectable communication of the Beloved, they are apt to cause it displeasure,<sup>1</sup> and, by their subtle flights, to quench its joy. These the Beloved says that He conjures by the pleasant lyres, etc. That is to say that, since the sweetness and delight of the soul are now so abundant and frequent and strong that they could not hinder it as they were wont to do aforetime, when it had not reached so high an estate, they are to cease their restless flights, their impetuositities and their excesses. This is to be understood after the same manner in the other parts of this stanza which we have here to expound, as for example:

### **Lions, harts, leaping does,**

3. By the lions are meant the acrimonies and impetuositities of the irascible faculty, which faculty is as bold and daring in its acts as are lions. By the harts and the leaping does is understood the other faculty of the soul, which is the concupiscible—that is, the power of desire,<sup>2</sup> which has two effects: the one is of cowardice and the other of boldness. It produces the effects of cowardice when it finds that things<sup>3</sup> are inconvenient to itself, for at such times it withdraws and retires within itself and behaves timidly,<sup>4</sup> and in these effects it is compared to the hart; for even as harts possess this concupiscible faculty to a higher degree than many other animals, so, too, they are very timid<sup>5</sup> and retiring. The effects of boldness it produces when it finds that

<sup>1</sup> [*sinsabor.*]

<sup>2</sup> [*apetecer.*]

<sup>3</sup> Lch abbreviates: 'which has two effects: the one is of cowardice, which it excites when it finds things . . . etc.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'behaves with cowardice.']

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'very cowardly.']

things are convenient to itself, for then it retires not any more, neither behaves timidly, but comes forth boldly to desire<sup>1</sup> them and accept them<sup>2</sup> with its desires and affections. And as concerns these effects of boldness this faculty is compared to the does, which have such concupiscence toward that which they desire, that not only do they run towards it, but they even leap after it, for which reason they are here called 'leaping.'

4. So that, in conjuring the lions, the Spouse restrains the impetuosities and excesses of wrath; and in conjuring the harts, He strengthens the concupiscible faculty with respect to the cowardice and feebleness of mind which aforetime caused it to shrink; and in conjuring the leaping does, He satisfies it and subdues the desires and appetites which aforetime roamed restlessly about, leaping like does from one thing to another, in order to satisfy that concupiscence which is now satisfied by the pleasant lyres, whose sweetness it enjoys, and by the sirens' song, upon the delight whereof it pastures. And it is to be noted that it is not wrath and concupiscence which the Spouse conjures here, for these faculties are never wanting in the soul, but their troublesome and disorderly acts, which are denoted by the lions, harts and leaping does; it is necessary in this estate that these should cease.

### **Mountains, valleys and<sup>3</sup> banks,**

5. By these three names are denoted the vicious and disorderly acts of the three faculties of the soul, which are memory, understanding and will, which acts are disorderly and vicious when they are carried to a high extreme, and likewise when they are at a low and defective extreme, or even when they are not at either extreme, but tend thereto in either direction. And thus by the mountains, which are very high, are signified acts which are extreme in being over-disorderly. By the valleys, which are very low, are signified the acts of these three faculties which are less extreme than is fitting. And by the banks, which are neither very high nor very low, yet, since they are not level, participate somewhat of the one extreme and of the other, are signified the acts of the faculties when these in some respect exceed or fail to reach that mean and level height of what is just. These acts, though not disorderly in the extreme, as they would be if they amounted to mortal sin, are nevertheless partially so, since they are either venial sins or

<sup>1</sup> [*apetecer.*]

<sup>2</sup> Bz, Bj: 'and to ask for them.' Lch: 'and imitate them.'

<sup>3</sup> ['And' appears here, though not in the stanza as written elsewhere.]

imperfections, however slight, in the understanding, the memory and the will. All these acts which exceed what is just He conjures likewise, by the pleasant lyres and the aforementioned song, that they cease; the which lyres and song have brought the three faculties of the soul to such perfection of efficiency that they are completely occupied in the just operation which pertains to them, and this to such an extent that they avoid not only every extreme but also any tendency thereto. There follow the remaining lines :

**Waters, breezes, heats, And terrors that keep watch by night.**

6. By these four things, again, are understood the affections of the four passions, which, as we said, are grief, hope, joy and fear. By the waters are understood the affections of grief which afflict the soul; for they enter the soul like water, wherefore David said to God in speaking of them : *Salvum me fac Deus, quoniam intraverunt aquæ usque ad animam meam.*<sup>1</sup> That is : Save me, my God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul. By the breezes are understood the affections of hope, for like the breezes they fly to desire that which is absent and is hoped for. Wherefore David says likewise : *Os meum aperui, et attraxi spiritum, quia mandata tua desiderabam.*<sup>2</sup> As though he were to say : I opened the mouth of my hope and drew in the breath of my desire, for I desired and hoped for Thy commandments. By the heats are understood the affections of the passion of joy, which enkindle the heart like fire; wherefore the same David says : *Concaluit cor meum intra me, et in meditatione mea exardescet ignis.*<sup>3</sup> Which signifies : My heart grew hot within me and in my meditation fire shall be enkindled; which is as much as to say : In my meditation shall joy be enkindled. By the terrors that keep watch by night are understood the affections of the other passion, which is fear; which affections, in spiritual persons that have not yet reached this estate of the Spiritual Marriage whereof we are speaking, are wont to be very great. At times they come from God, when He desires to grant such persons certain favours, as we have said above, and is wont to bring fear and affright to their spirits, and likewise a shrinking to their flesh and senses, since they have not fortified and perfected their nature and habituated it to these favours of God. At times, again, they come from the devil, who, when God grants the soul recollection and sweetness in Himself, becomes very envious and

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxviii, 1 [A.V., lxxix, 1.]

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxviii, 131 [A.V., cxix, 131].

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xxxviii, 4 [A.V., xxxix, 3].

greatly afflicted because of that blessing and peace which have come to the soul, and contrives to set horror and fear in its spirit, to hinder it from obtaining that blessing; sometimes, he even threatens it within its very spirit. And when he sees that he cannot reach the inmost part of the soul, since it is deeply recollected and closely united with God, he then attacks it from without, in its sensual part, and sets there distraction<sup>1</sup> or inconstancy, and sensible afflictions<sup>2</sup> and pains and horror, if haply by this means he may harry the Bride in her marriage-chamber. These things the Spouse calls terrors of the night, because they all come from evil spirits, and because by their means the devil tries to diffuse darkness in the soul by obscuring the Divine light wherein it is rejoicing. He says of these fears that they keep watch, because their effect is to cause the soul to watch and to awaken it from its sweet inward sleep, and likewise because the evil spirits that cause<sup>3</sup> them are ever watching to produce them. These fears, coming from God, or from the devil, as I have said, are infused, almost<sup>4</sup> passively, into the spirits of those who are already spiritual; and I treat not here of other fears which are temporal or natural, because it is not for spiritual people to have such fears, whereas to have the spiritual fears aforementioned is proper to spiritual people.

7. So the Beloved likewise conjures all these four manners of affection of the four passions of the soul, making them to cease and be at rest, since He now gives to the Bride in this estate riches and strength and satisfaction in the pleasant lyres of His sweetness and the sirens' song of His delight, so that not only can these things not reign within her but they cannot even cause her the least degree of displeasure. For the grandeur and stability<sup>5</sup> of the soul in this estate are so complete that, if formerly there reached the soul the waters of any grief soever, even those of its own sins or of the sins of some other person, which is what spiritual persons habitually feel the most, now, although it still realizes their importance, they cause it neither pain nor sorrow;<sup>6</sup> and it no longer feels compassion,<sup>7</sup> though it performs the works of compassion and has the perfection thereof; for in this estate the soul has no longer that part of its virtues which was weak, but there remains to it that which was strong, constant and perfect in them; for in this transformation of love the soul acts as do the angels, who apprehend

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'he sets without, at least, in its sensual part, distraction.']

<sup>2</sup> [*aprietos.*] Lch has [*apetitos*], 'appetites.'

<sup>3</sup> Bj: 'accuse.'

<sup>4</sup> Md alone has 'almost.'

<sup>5</sup> Br has *esta utilidad* ('this utility') for *estabilidad* ('stability').

<sup>6</sup> Md: 'nor agonizing sorrow.'

<sup>7</sup> Md adds: 'with anguish.'

perfectly things that are grievous without feeling grief, and perform works of mercy and compassion without feeling compassion; although occasionally and in occasional matters God bestows a favour upon the soul, granting it to feel sorrow and allowing it to suffer, that it may grow in merit, even as He did with the Virgin Mother and with Saint Paul;<sup>1</sup> but the estate does not imply this condition necessarily.

8. Neither does the soul grieve because of the desires of hope, for, being now satisfied, in so far as is possible in this life, by its union with God, it has naught to hope for with respect to the world, and naught to desire with respect to that which is spiritual, since it sees and feels itself to be full of the riches of God,<sup>2</sup> and thus, in life and in death, is conformed and reconciled to God's will. And thus the desire to see God which it experiences is without affliction.<sup>3</sup> The affections of joy, too, which were wont to be felt by the soul, to a greater or a lesser degree, seem to be in no way diminished, nor does their abundance cause it surprise. For its rejoicing is habitually so great that, like the sea, it is not diminished by the rivers that flow from it, neither is it increased by those that enter it; for it is within this soul that there is made that spring, the water whereof, as Christ says through Saint John, springs up to eternal life.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the terrors that keep watch by night fail to reach it, since it is so pure and so strong and so firmly fixed upon God in its repose that they can neither obscure it with their darkness, nor affright it with their terrors,<sup>5</sup> nor awaken it with their impetuosities; and thus naught can either reach it or molest it, since it has entered, as we have said, from all of these, into the pleasant garden of its desire, where it enjoys all peace, tastes all sweetness and delights itself in all delight, according as the condition and estate of this life allow. For of the soul in such an estate is understood that which the Wise Man says in the Proverbs, in these words: *Secura mens quasi iuge convivium*.<sup>6</sup> That is: The soul that is secure and peaceful is like a continual feast; for, even as in a feast there are meats of all kinds delectable to the palate and music of all kinds sweet to the ear, even so the soul, in this continual feast which it experiences upon the bosom of its Beloved, enjoys all delight and tastes all sweetness.

<sup>1</sup> 'And with Saint Paul' is the Saint's addition [made in the original, not here, but, rather clumsily, at the end of the next clause]. It is not found in the MSS., in Br or in Md.

<sup>2</sup> Md adds: 'although it may grow in charity.'

<sup>3</sup> This sentence is an addition by the Saint, found neither in the other MSS. nor in Br or Md.

<sup>4</sup> St. John iv, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Bj: 'with their impetuosities.' Lch: 'with their fears.'

<sup>6</sup> Proverbs xv, 15.

9. Let it not appear to the reader of this that in what we have said we are indulging ourselves in mere words, for in truth, if it were necessary to explain that which passes through the soul that arrives at this happy estate, all words, and time itself, would fail us, and still the greater part would remain to be expounded; for, if the soul is enabled to reach the peace of God, which surpasses all that is of sense, then all that is of sense will remain bereft and mute at having to expound it. The lines continue:

**By the pleasant lyres And by the sirens' song, I conjure you.**

10. We have already said that the pleasant lyres signify the sweetness of the soul in this estate, for, even as the music of the lyres fills the spirit with sweetness and refreshment, and it is so much absorbed and enraptured thereby that it is withdrawn from afflictions and distresses, even so does this sweetness keep the soul so completely within itself, that no affliction reaches it. Wherefore the Spouse conjures all the things that trouble<sup>1</sup> the faculties and passions to cease because of this sweetness. Furthermore, the song of the sirens, as has also been said, signifies the habitual delight which the soul possesses,<sup>2</sup> by the which likewise it is freed from all the hindrances and troublesome operations<sup>3</sup> aforementioned.<sup>4</sup> These are meant in the next line, which says:

**Cease your wrath<sup>5</sup>**

11. Indicating by wrath all the disorderly affections and operations whereof we have spoken. For, even as wrath is a certain impetuosity that goes beyond the limit of reason when it works viciously, so all the affections and operations aforementioned exceed the limits of tranquillity of the soul if they reign therein. Wherefore He says:

**And touch not the wall,**

12. By the wall is meant the rampart of peace and virtues and perfections which the soul now has, and by which it is now protected, which is the wall and defence of the garden of its Beloved. Wherefore He speaks of it thus in the Songs: *Hortus conclusus soror mea*.<sup>6</sup> Which

<sup>1</sup> [*a todas las molestias de.*] Bj has: [*a todas las bestias de*] 'all the beasts of.'

<sup>2</sup> The Saint has a marginal note here: 'The property of the sirens' song.'

<sup>3</sup> V, Vd, G, Gr, Lch, Br: 'operations [and] troubles.'

<sup>4</sup> The Saint's addition, not found in the editions or manuscripts.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'let your wraths cease.']

<sup>6</sup> Canticles iv, 12.

signifies: My sister is a garden enclosed. Wherefore, He says, 'touch not this wall.'

**That the Bride may sleep more securely.**

13. That is to say, that she may delight the more according to her pleasure in the quiet and sweetness whereof she has fruition in the garden which she has entered, her neck reclining upon the gentle arms of the Beloved, so that there is now no door closed to the soul.<sup>1</sup>

STANZA XXXI

**O nymphs of Judæa, While mid the flowers and rose-trees the  
ambar sends forth perfume,  
Dwell in the outskirts And desire not to touch our thresholds.**

EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza it is the Bride that speaks, who, seeing herself adorned, according to her higher and spiritual part, with such rich and excellent gifts and delights, which come from her Beloved, desires to preserve herself in the security and continual possession thereof, which, in the two preceding stanzas, the Spouse has granted her. She sees that in her lower part—namely, sensuality—there may be impediments, as in fact there are,<sup>2</sup> which disturb so great a blessing. She therefore bids the operations and motions of that her lower part to be stilled in her faculties and senses, and not to pass beyond the limits of their own region, that of the senses, nor to trouble or harass the higher and spiritual part of the soul, lest it should be kept, by any motion, howsoever small, from the blessing and sweetness which it enjoys. For if motions of the sensual part and its faculties take place when the spirit is in fruition, they trouble and harass it all the more when they are busier and more active.

**O nymphs of Judæa,**

2. By Judæa she means the lower part of the soul, which is that of the senses. And she calls it Judæa, because it is weak and carnal and of itself blind, even as are the Jewish people. And by nymphs she means

<sup>1</sup> The last clause is the Saint's marginal addition, found neither in the MSS. nor in Br or Md.

<sup>2</sup> This clause is an interlinear addition made by the Saint and not found in the other authorities cited in these footnotes.

all the imaginations, fancies and motions and affections of this lower part. All these she calls nymphs, because, even as the nymphs attract lovers to themselves by their affectionate nature and their grace, so these operations and motions of sensuality contrive to attract the will pleasantly to themselves from the rational part of the soul, taking it away from that which is inward and making it to love that which is outward, which they themselves love and desire, and likewise moving the understanding and attracting it to be married and united with them after their base, sensual manner, contriving to bring into conformity and to unite the rational part with the sensual. You sensual motions and operations, then, she says:

**While mid the flowers and rose-trees the ambar sends forth perfume,**

3. The flowers are the virtues of the soul, as we said above. The rose-trees are the three faculties of the soul: understanding, memory and will; these bear roses and flowers of Divine conceptions and acts of love and of virtues. The ambar is the Divine Spirit Who dwells in the soul; and for this Divine ambar to send forth perfume amid the flowers and rose-trees is for it to communicate and scatter itself most sweetly in the faculties and virtues of the soul, thereby giving the soul a perfume of Divine sweetness. For so long, then, as this Divine Spirit is giving spiritual sweetness to my soul,

### **Dwell in the outskirts**

4. In the outskirts of Judæa, which, we said, are the sensual part of the soul. Its outskirts are the inward sensual senses, such as the fancy, the imagination, the memory, wherein meet and gather the fancies and imaginations and forms of things. It is these which are here called nymphs, and which enter these outskirts of the inward senses through the gates of the outward senses, which are hearing, sight, smell, taste, touch; so that we may term all these faculties and senses of this sensual part outskirts, which are the suburbs that are without the city. For that which is called city in the soul is that most inward part, which is the rational part, and it is this that has capacity for communion with God, and the operations of which are contrary to those of sensuality. But since there is natural communication between the dwellers in these outskirts (which are the sensual part of the soul, these dwellers being the nymphs of whom we speak) so that that which is done in this part is habitually felt in the other more inward part, which is the rational,

and in consequence causes itself to be noticed and disturbs that spiritual work which it has in God, she tells them to dwell in her outskirts—that is, to be stilled in the outward and inward senses of her sensual part.

**And desire not to touch our thresholds.**

5. That is, touch not the higher part even in your first motions, for the first motions of the soul are the entrances and the thresholds to an entrance therein, and, when they pass from being first motions into the reason, they are crossing<sup>1</sup> the thresholds; but, when they are naught but first motions, they are said only to touch the thresholds or to knock at the door, which happens when attacks upon the reason are made by sensuality with regard to some disorderly act. The Bride here not only bids these not to touch the soul; she even forbids considerations to do so which make not for the tranquillity and blessing whereof the soul has fruition. And thus this sensual part, with all its faculties, its strength and its weaknesses, is already surrendered in this estate to the spirit. This life is therefore a blessed one, like to that of the estate of innocence wherein all the harmony and ability of man's sensual part served him for greater recreation and as a help to a knowledge and love of God in peace and concord with his higher part. Happy the soul that reaches this estate. But who is he, and we will praise him? For he hath done wonderful things in his life.<sup>2</sup>

6. This stanza has been placed here to describe the quiet and secure peace of the soul that reaches this high estate; not so that it may be thought that the soul here expresses this desire—namely, that these nymphs shall be stilled—because they disturb the Bride in this estate, for they are already stilled, as has been explained above; this desire belongs rather to those who are progressing, and to those who have progressed, than to those who are now perfect, for over these last the passions and motions have little or no empire.

<sup>1</sup> A number of versions differ [almost imperceptibly in English]. G, V, Vd, Br read: 'when they pass from being first motions they unite (*enlaʒan*) and are crossing . . .'

<sup>2</sup> [Ecclesiasticus xxxi, 9.]

## STANZA XXXII

Hide thyself, dearest one, And look with thy face upon the  
 mountains,  
 And desire not to speak, But look upon her companions<sup>1</sup> who  
 travels mid strange islands.

## EXPOSITION

**A**FTER the Spouse and the Bride have in the last stanzas restrained and enjoined silence upon the passions and faculties of the soul, both sensual and spiritual, which might perturb it, the Bride returns in this stanza to rejoice in her Beloved with inward recollection of her soul, where He is united with her in love, where secretly, in a glorious<sup>2</sup> manner,<sup>3</sup> He rejoices in her, and where the things that she experiences in this recollection of her marriage with her Beloved are so lofty and so delectable that she cannot describe them nor yet would desire to do so; for they are such things as those whereof Isaias says: *Secretum meum mihi, secretum meum mihi*.<sup>4</sup> And thus to herself alone she possesses Him, and alone understands Him, and alone rejoices in Him, and is glad to be alone with Him;<sup>5</sup> wherefore her desire is that He may be deeply hidden and greatly exalted and far removed<sup>6</sup> from all outward communication. In this respect she is like the merchant with the pearl, or, to express it better, like the man who, finding the treasure hidden in the field, went and hid it with joy<sup>7</sup> and possessed it. It is this that the same soul now entreats of the Spouse in this stanza, wherein with this desire she begs of Him four things. First, that He will be pleased to have communion with her most inwardly in the hidden part of her soul. Secondly, that He will illumine<sup>8</sup> her faculties with the glory and greatness of His Divinity. Thirdly, that He will deal with her so sublimely that none may wish or be able to describe it, and that the outward and sensual part of her soul may be unable to apprehend it. And fourthly, she begs Him to fall in love with the many virtues that He has placed in her, now that she is going to Him and soaring aloft through high and noble knowledge of the Divinity, and through

<sup>1</sup> G, V: 'countries.' See p. 29, n. 5.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'great.']

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'in great manner.'] Bj: 'in great love.'

<sup>4</sup> Isaias xxiv, 16.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'is glad that it is alone' (sc., that she does these things).]

<sup>6</sup> Gr: 'and exalted and withdrawn.'

<sup>7</sup> Lch: 'went and bought it secretly.'

<sup>8</sup> [*Lit.*, 'assail.']

excesses of love most strange and singular, surpassing such as she habitually experiences.

**Hide thyself, dearest one,<sup>1</sup>**

2. As though she were to say: Dear Spouse of mine, withdraw Thee into the inmost part of my soul, communicating Thyself to it after a secret fashion, and manifesting<sup>2</sup> to it Thy hidden wonders, which are far removed from all mortal eyes.

**And look with thy face upon the mountains,**

3. The face of God is His Divinity and the mountains are the faculties of the soul—memory, understanding and will. Thus it is as though she were to say: Assail my understanding with Thy Divinity, giving it Divine intelligence; and my will, giving and communicating to it Divine love; and my memory, with Divine possession of glory. Herein the soul prays Him for all that for which she may pray, since<sup>3</sup> she is not now being content with knowledge and communication of God from behind, such as God granted to Moses—that is, with a knowledge of Him by His effects and works;<sup>4</sup> but she desires to see the face of God, which is essential communication of His Divinity, without any kind of intermediary in the soul, through certain contact thereof with the Divinity. This is a thing far removed from all sense and accidents, inasmuch as it is the touch of pure substances—that is, of the soul<sup>5</sup> and the Divinity. Wherefore she says next:

**And desire not to speak,**

4. That is to say: And desire not to speak as Thou didst aforetime, when the communications that Thou workedst in me were such that Thou didst utter them to the outward senses, since they concerned things whereof these were capable, and were not so sublime and profound that the senses could not attain to them. But now let them be so sublime and so substantial, and so intimate, that Thou mayest not utter them to the outward senses, and that these may not be capable thereof. For substance cannot be communicated in the senses, and thus a thing that can be apprehended by sense is not essentially God. The

<sup>1</sup> [*Carillo*. On this word, see Dámaso Alonso, *La Poesía de San Juan de la Cruz*, Madrid, 1942, p. 136.]

<sup>2</sup> Bj: 'communicating.'

<sup>3</sup> Bj has the emendation: 'This is the greatest communication that she can pray for, since . . .' etc.

<sup>4</sup> [Exodus xxxiii, 22-3.]

<sup>5</sup> Md adds: 'by means of the faculties aforementioned.'

soul, then, desiring here this essential communication of God, which is not apprehended by sense, prays Him that it may be of such a kind that He may not utter it to the senses. She says, then: Desire not to communicate Thyself in this way, which is so unworthy and so exterior that it can be communicated by sense and by speech.

**But look upon her companions<sup>1</sup>**

5. We have already said that for God to look is for Him to love; those whom the Bride here calls companions are the multitude of virtues and gifts and perfections and spiritual riches of the soul. It is thus as though she were to say: But rather do Thou turn inward, Dearest One, and fall in love with the companions—namely, the virtues and perfections which Thou hast set in my soul: so that, having come to love my soul through them, Thou mayest hide Thyself in her and remain in her; for in truth, although they be Thine, yet, since Thou hast given them to her, they are hers<sup>2</sup> likewise.

**Who travels mid strange islands.**

6. That is, my soul, which travels to Thee through strange knowledge of Thee, and by ways and in manners that are strange, and far removed from all the senses, and from common natural knowledge. This is as though she were to say: Since my soul travels to Thee through strange knowledge that is far removed from the senses, do Thou communicate Thyself to her likewise after so inward and sublime a manner that Thy communication may be far removed from them all.

<sup>1</sup> G, Lch, V, Md: 'countries.' See p. 29, n. 5, above.

<sup>2</sup> The Saint adds 'hers,' which word is found also in G, V, Vd, Gr, Br.

## STANZA XXXIII

SPOUSE<sup>1</sup>

**The little white dove Has returned to the ark with the bough,  
And now the turtle-dove Has found the mate of her desire on  
the green banks.**

## EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza it is the Spouse Who speaks, singing of the purity which the Bride now has in this estate, and of the riches and the prize which she has won, through having prepared herself and laboured to come to Him. Likewise He sings of the great happiness which she has experienced in finding her Spouse in this union, and He describes the fulfilment of her desires and the delight and refreshment which she possesses in Him now that the labours and trials of her life and of the time past are over. He says, then:

**The little white dove**

2. He calls the soul a little white dove by reason of the whiteness and cleanness which it has received of the grace that it has found in God. This little dove, He says,

**Has returned to the ark with the bough,**

3. Here He makes a comparison between the soul and the dove from the ark of Noe, taking that coming and going of the dove to and from the ark as a figure of that which has come to pass in the soul in this case.<sup>2</sup> For, even as the dove that left the ark of Noe returned to it with an olive branch in its beak,<sup>3</sup> as a sign of the mercy of God in commanding the waters to withdraw from the earth, which was overwhelmed by the flood,<sup>4</sup> even so the soul in such case, which left the ark of God's Omnipotence when He created it, has flown over the waters of the flood of the sins, imperfections and afflictions and trials of this life, and returns to the ark, which is the bosom of its Creator, with the olive branch, which is the clemency and mercy that God has shown it in having brought it to so high an estate of perfection and having made

<sup>1</sup> This word, inserted by the Saint, is only found in the Sanlúcar Codex.

<sup>2</sup> Lch: 'in this estate.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz, Bj: 'in its mouth.'

<sup>4</sup> Genesis viii, 11.

the waters of sins to withdraw from the earth of the soul and given it victory,<sup>1</sup> notwithstanding all the war and assault of its enemies, which had ever striven to prevent this; wherefore the branch signifies victory over its enemies and also the reward of its merits. And thus not only does the little dove now return to the ark of its God, white and clean, even as it left that ark at its creation, but it also brings something with it—namely, the branch, which is the reward and the peace that it has obtained through its victory.

**And now the turtle-dove Has found the mate of her desire on the green banks.**

4. He also calls the soul here a turtle-dove, because in this matter it has been like the little turtle-dove when it found the mate that it desired. And that this may be the better understood, it is to be known that it is written of the turtle-dove that when it finds not its mate<sup>2</sup> it neither sits upon the green bough, nor drinks of clear or cold water, nor settles beneath the shade, nor joins with other birds;<sup>3</sup> but when it is united with its Spouse it then has fruition of all this. All these properties are applicable to the soul; for, ere it reaches this spiritual union with its Beloved it must needs desire to be devoid of all delight (that is, not to sit upon the green bough), and all honour and glory of the world, and pleasure (which is not to drink the clear and cold water), and all refreshment and favour of the world (which is not to seek protection in the shade), desiring to rest in naught and sighing ever for solitude from all things until it find its Spouse.

5. 'And since the soul in such case, ere it reached this estate, went about in this way seeking its Beloved, like the turtle-dove, and neither finding nor desiring to find consolation or refreshment save only in Him, the same Spouse sings here of the end of the fatigues of the Bride and the fulfilment of her desires, saying that at last the turtle-dove has found the mate of her desire upon the green banks. This is to say that she now sits upon the green bough, delighting in her Beloved; and that she now drinks the clear water of sublime contemplation and wisdom of God, water which is cold, signifying the refreshment that

<sup>1</sup> Bj: 'and gained victory.' Bz abbreviates: 'and having gained the victory in the whole war . . .', etc.

<sup>2</sup> So Lch. The other versions (including the Sanlúcar Codex) read: 'consort.'

<sup>3</sup> This last phrase is the Saint's addition, found only in the Sanlúcar Codex. [The sentence as a whole, a paraphrase of a well-known Spanish ballad, "Fontefrida", is evidence that he was acquainted with this traditional form of art. See J. M. de Cossío, in *Boletín de la Biblioteca Menéndez Pelayo*, XI, 267, and Dámaso Alonso, *La Poesía de San Juan de la Cruz*, Madrid, 1942, p. 106.]

she has in Him; and likewise settles beneath the shadow of His protection and favour, which she had so greatly desired, wherein she is comforted and refreshed after a delectable and Divine manner, even as she declares joyously in the Songs, saying: *Sub umbra illius, quem desideraveram sedi, et fructus ejus dulcis gutturi meo.*<sup>1</sup> Which is to say: I sat down under the shadow of Him that I had desired, and His fruit is sweet to my palate.

## STANZA XXXIV

**In solitude she lived And in solitude now has built her nest,  
And in solitude her dear one alone guides her, Who likewise  
in solitude was wounded by love.**<sup>2</sup>

## EXPOSITION

**C**ONTINUING, the Spouse describes the contentment which He derives from the solitude experienced by the soul before she reached this union, and that which He has from the solitude with respect to all fatigues and trials and hindrances which now is hers, since she has made a tranquil and delectable abode in her Beloved, and is free and far withdrawn from all things and the trouble which they bring. Likewise He manifests His pleasure that this solitude which the soul now possesses should have been a means whereby she could indeed be guided and moved by the Spouse, which could not be aforesaid, since she had not then made her nest in solitude—that is, had not attained a habit of perfection and tranquillity<sup>3</sup> of solitude whereby she is now moved and guided to the Divine things of the Spirit of God. He says not only that He now guides her in this solitude, but that<sup>4</sup> He does it alone, communicating Himself to her without intermediaries—either angels, or men, or images, or forms;<sup>5</sup> and that, even as she has fallen in love with Him, so is He wounded with love for her in this solitude

<sup>1</sup> Canticles ii, 3.

<sup>2</sup> [On this stanza, see K. Vossler, *La Poesia de la soledad en España*, Buenos Aires, 1946, pp. 250–2.]

<sup>3</sup> 'Tranquillity' (*quietud*) is the Saint's emendation for 'virtue' (*virtud*), which was the word originally used in the Sanlúcar Codex and is in all the others, except Gr. Br and Md also have 'virtue.'

<sup>4</sup> Lch omits all that stands between 'tranquillity of solitude' and 'but that.'

<sup>5</sup> Md adds: 'apart from the kinds of knowledge (*las inteligencias*) mentioned in the second line of stanza thirty-three' (in this edition stanza thirty-two).

and liberty of spirit which comes to her through the solitude aforementioned. For this solitude He greatly loves, and thus says :

### **In solitude she lived**

2. The little turtle-dove aforementioned, which is the soul, lived in solitude before it found the Beloved in this estate of union. For the soul that desires God is in no wise comforted or satisfied by any company soever; all things make and cause within it ever greater solitude until it find Him.

### **And in solitude now has built her nest,**

3. The solitude wherein the soul lived aforesaid was its desire to be without all the blessings of the world, for the sake of its Spouse, even as we have said of the turtle-dove. It strove to become perfect, and to acquire perfect solitude, wherein the soul attains to union with the Word, and consequently to all refreshment and rest. It is this that is signified by the nest which is here spoken of—namely, rest and repose. And it is thus as though He were to say: In that solitude wherein aforesaid she lived, working therein with labour and anguish, because she was not perfect, she has now set her rest and refreshment, since she has now acquired this solitude perfectly in God. Of this says David, speaking spiritually: *Etenim passer invenit sibi domum, et turtur nidum ubi reponat pullos suos.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: The bird<sup>2</sup> has indeed found herself a house, and the turtle-dove a nest wherein to rear her young. That is, an abode in God where she may satisfy her desires and faculties.

### **And in solitude . . . guides her,**

4 This signifies: In that solitude which the soul has with respect to all things and wherein she is alone with God, He guides and moves her and raises her to Divine things—that is to say, He raises her understanding to Divine intelligence, since it is now alone and stripped of all other strange and contradictory intelligence; and He moves her will freely to the love of God, for it is now alone and free from other affections; and He fills her memory with Divine knowledge, since it, too, is now alone and emptied of other imaginings and fancies. For, as soon as the soul disencumbers these faculties and voids them of all lower things and of all attachment<sup>3</sup> to higher things, leaving them in

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxxiii, 4 [A.V., lxxxiv, 3]. G, Br, Vd, Lch also give this text.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 84, n. 2, above.

<sup>3</sup> [*propiedad*, 'love of possession,' 'sense of ownership'; cf. Vol. III, p. 202, n. 7.]

solitude, with naught else, God at once uses them for the invisible and Divine, and it is God Who guides the soul in this solitude, even as Saint Paul says concerning the perfect: *Qui spiritu Dei aguntur*, etc.<sup>1</sup> That is: They are moved by the Spirit of God. Which is the same as saying: In solitude there guides her . . .

**. . . her dear one alone**

5. This signifies that not only does He guide her in her solitude, but that it is He Himself alone Who works in her, using no other intermediary. For it is the characteristic of this union of the soul with God in the Spiritual Marriage that God works in her and communicates Himself to her alone, not now by means of angels, as aforesaid, neither by means of her natural ability. For the outward and inward senses, and all creatures, and even the soul herself, have very little to do with the receiving of these great and supernatural favours which God grants in this estate: they belong not to the ability and natural working and diligence of the soul—He alone works them in her.<sup>2</sup> And the reason for this is that He finds her alone, as has been said, and thus He will give her no other company, nor will He have her profit by any other, or trust any other, save Himself only. And it is also fitting that, since the soul has now left all things and passed beyond all intermediaries, soaring above them all to God, God Himself should be her guide and the intermediary to Himself. Now that the soul has soared above everything, and is withdrawn from everything, none of these things is now of any profit or service to her that she may soar higher, save the Word Himself, which is the Spouse. And He is so greatly enamoured of Her that it is He alone Who desires to work these things. And so He next says:

**Who likewise in solitude was wounded by love.**

6. For, now that the soul has remained alone and is withdrawn from all things through love of Him,<sup>3</sup> He becomes greatly enamoured of her in that solitude, even as she also became enamoured of Him in solitude, being wounded within herself by love for Him; and thus He will not leave her alone, but, being in His turn wounded with love for her, through the solitude which she is experiencing because of Him, He alone guides her alone, causing her to surrender to Him, and fulfilling

<sup>1</sup> Romans viii, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Md adds: 'and with her.'

<sup>3</sup> In the margin the Saint has written here: 'How, although the soul rejoices in company, it desires (*apetece*) solitude.'

her desires, which He would not do in her had He not found her in solitude. Wherefore the same Spouse says of the soul through the Prophet Osee: *Ducam illam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor eius*.<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: I will guide her into solitude and will there speak to her heart. He says that He will speak to her heart, meaning that He will give Himself to her, for to speak to the heart is to satisfy the heart, which is not satisfied with less than God.

## STANZA XXXV

BRIDE<sup>2</sup>

**Let us rejoice, Beloved, And let us go to see ourselves in thy  
beauty,  
To the mountain or the hill where flows the pure water; Let  
us enter farther into the thicket.**

## EXPOSITION

**N**OW that the perfect union of love is made between the soul and God, the soul desires to employ and exercise herself in the properties which pertain to love, and thus it is she who speaks in this stanza with the Spouse, praying Him for three things which are proper to love. First, she desires to receive the joy and sweetness of love, and for this she prays Him when she says: 'Let us rejoice, Beloved.' The second desire is that she may become like to the Beloved, and for this she prays Him when she says: 'Let us go to see ourselves in Thy beauty.' And the third desire is to delve into the things and secrets of the same Beloved, and to know them, and for this she prays Him when she says: 'Let us enter farther into the thicket.' There follows the line:

**Let us rejoice, Beloved,**

2. That is to say, in the communication of the sweetness of love, not only in that which we already have in the habitual joining together and union of us both, but in that which overflows in the exercise of affective and actual love, whether interiorly with the will in acts of affection, or exteriorly, in the performance of works belonging to the

<sup>1</sup> Osee ii, 14.

<sup>2</sup> The Saint himself inserts this word, which is not copied by Br, Md or the MSS.

service of the Beloved. For, as we have said, love, where it has been firmly set, has this quality, that it desires ever to continue tasting its joys and sweetnesses, which are the exercise of loving interiorly and exteriorly, as we have said. All this the soul does that she may become more like to the Beloved, and thus she says next:

**And let us go to see ourselves in thy beauty,**

3. Which signifies: Let us so act that, by means of this exercise of love aforementioned, we may come to see ourselves in Thy beauty: that is, that we may be alike in beauty, and that Thy beauty may be such that, when one of us looks at the other, each may be like to Thee in Thy beauty, and may see himself in Thy beauty,<sup>1</sup> which will be the transforming of me in Thy beauty; and thus I shall see Thee in Thy beauty and Thou wilt see me in Thy beauty; and Thou wilt see Thyself in me in Thy beauty, and I shall see myself in Thee in Thy beauty; so that thus<sup>2</sup> I may be like to Thee in Thy beauty and Thou mayest be like to me in Thy beauty, and my beauty may be Thy beauty, and Thy beauty my beauty; and I shall be Thou in Thy beauty and Thou wilt be I in Thy beauty, because Thy beauty itself will be my beauty.<sup>3</sup> This is the adoption of the sons of God, who will truly say to God that which the Son Himself said through Saint John to the Eternal Father, in these words: *Omnia mea tua sunt, et tua mea sunt.*<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: Father, all My things are Thine and Thy things are Mine. He by essence, being the Son by nature; we by participation, being sons by adoption. And thus He spake, not only for Himself, Who is the Head, but for His whole mystical body, which is the Church.

### To the mountain or the hill

4. This means to the knowledge of the morning,<sup>5</sup> as theologians say, which is knowledge in the Divine Word, Who is here understood by the mountain; because the Word<sup>6</sup> is the loftiest essential Wisdom of God. Or let us go to the knowledge of the evening, which is the wisdom of God in His creatures and works and wondrous ordinances; this is here signified by the hill, which is lower than the mountain. When the

<sup>1</sup> This clause is omitted in G, Gr, V, Vd, Br.

<sup>2</sup> 'Thus' is added by the Saint, and not copied in Br, Md or the MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Bz, Bj, confused by this playing upon words, omit several phrases in the passage. 8,654 omits only 'and Thou mayest be like to me in Thy beauty.'

<sup>4</sup> St. John xvii, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Md adds: 'that is, to the knowledge like to that of the morning.' Bj reads: 'of matrimony' for 'of the morning.'

<sup>6</sup> Md: 'the Divine Word.'

soul, then, says: 'Let us go to the mountain to see ourselves in Thy beauty,' she means: Make me like to the beauty of Divine Wisdom, and inform me therewith; which Wisdom, as we say, is the Son of God. And when she says: 'Or let us go to the hill,' she is praying to be informed likewise by His Wisdom and His mysteries in His creatures and works, which also is beauty wherein the soul desires to see herself enlightened. The soul cannot see herself in the beauty of God and be made like to Him therein, save by being transformed in the Wisdom of God, wherein that which is above is seen and possessed;<sup>1</sup> wherefore she desires to go to the mountain or to the hill. *Vadam ad montem myrrhæ et ad collem thuris.*<sup>2</sup>

### Where flows the pure water;

5. This signifies: Where the knowledge and wisdom of God, which here she calls pure water, are given to the understanding, clean and free from accidents and fancies, and clear from the darkness of ignorance. The soul has ever this desire to understand the Divine truths in a clear and pure way; and the more she loves, the more deeply she desires to penetrate them; wherefore she makes her third request, saying:

### Let us enter farther into the thicket.

6. Into the thicket of Thy marvellous works and profound judgments, the multitude whereof<sup>3</sup> is so great, and of such great variety, that it may be called a thicket. For therein is abundant wisdom, so full of mysteries that it can be called not only thick, but even curdled, according as David says in these words: *Mons Dei, mons pinguis, mons coagulatus, mons pinguis.*<sup>4</sup> Which is to say: The mountain of God is a mountain thick and a mountain curdled. And this thicket of wisdom and knowledge of God is so profound and vast that, for all that the soul may know thereof, she can ever enter farther still, so vast is it, and so incomprehensible are its riches, according as Saint Paul exclaims, saying: 'O the height of the riches of wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments and incomprehensible His ways!'<sup>5</sup>

7. But the soul desires to enter this thicket and incomprehensibility

<sup>1</sup> Md adds: 'as far as is possible in this life.'

<sup>2</sup> The quotation [Canticles iv, 6] is added by the Saint, and developed in the second redaction. [See p. 361, below.]

<sup>3</sup> 'That the multitude' is thus amended by the Saint; the emendation is followed by Lch, 8, 654, G, V, Vd, Br, Md.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm lxxvii, 16 [A.V., lxxviii, 16].

<sup>5</sup> Romans xi, 33.

of judgments and ways, because she is dying with desire to enter very far into the knowledge of them; for to have that knowledge is a priceless delight, exceeding all that can be felt. Wherefore David, speaking of their sweetness, said thus: *Judicia Domini vera, justificata in semet-ipsa, desiderabilia super aurum, et lapidem pretiosum multum, dulciora super mel et favum; nam et servus tuus dilexit ea.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: The judgments of God are true and have justice in themselves; they are more to be desired and are more coveted<sup>2</sup> than gold and than the precious stone of great worth; and they are sweet above honey and the honeycomb, so much so, that thy servant loved and kept them. Wherefore the soul greatly desires to be immersed in these judgments and to have a deeper knowledge of them;<sup>3</sup> and to that end it would be a great consolation and joy to her to pass through all the afflictions and trials of the world, and through all else that might be a means thereto, howsoever difficult and grievous it might be.

8. And thus the thicket may be understood in this line as signifying trials and tribulations, wherein the soul also desires to enter when she says: 'Let us enter farther into the thicket.' That is to say, into trials and afflictions, insomuch as they are a means of entrance into the thicket of the delectable wisdom of God; for the purest suffering causes and entails the purest knowledge, and, in consequence, the purest and loftiest joy which comes from deepest penetration. So, not content with any manner of suffering, the soul says: 'Let us enter farther into the thicket.' Wherefore Job, desiring this suffering, said: *Quis det ut veniat petitio mea, et quod expecto, tribuat mihi Deus? Et qui coepit, ipse me conterat, solvat manum suam, et succidat me? Et hæc mihi sit consolatio, ut affligens me dolore, non parcat mihi?*<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: Who will grant that my petition may be fulfilled and that God may give me that for which I hope, and that He that began me may destroy<sup>5</sup> me and let loose His hand and cut me off, and that I may have this consolation, that He will afflict me with grief and will not pardon or relieve me?

9. Oh, that it might be perfectly understood how the soul cannot attain to the thicket of the wisdom and riches of God, save by entering into the thicket of many kinds of suffering and by setting thereupon its consolation and desire! And how the soul that of a truth desires wisdom first desires truly to enter farther into the thicket of the Cross, which is

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xviii, 11 [A.V., xix, 9-11].

<sup>2</sup> Lch: 'they are more wondrous and to be coveted.'

<sup>3</sup> *Fulcite me floribus*, adds the Saint in the margin of the Sanlúcar Codex.

<sup>4</sup> Job vi, 8-10.

<sup>5</sup> [*Desmenuçar*, 'break into small pieces.']

the road of life, which few enter!<sup>1</sup> For the desire to enter into the thicket of wisdom and riches and favours of God comes to all; but the desire to enter into the thicket of trials and pains, for the sake of the Son of God, comes to few. Thus many would fain see themselves at the end, without passing along the road and way thereto.

### STANZA XXXVI

**And then we shall go forth To the lofty caverns of the rock  
which are well hidden,  
And there shall we enter And taste the new wine of the pome-  
granates.**

#### EXPOSITION

**O**NE of the causes which move the soul most to desire to enter into this thicket of the wisdom of God and to have a knowledge of suffering<sup>2</sup> very deeply in His judgments, as we have said, is that it may be able to pass on thence to a union of its understanding and to a knowledge of the high mysteries of the Incarnation of the Word, as of the soul's highest and most delectable wisdom; to which clear knowledge it comes not without having first entered into the thicket of knowledge and experience of trials whereof we have spoken. And thus the Bride in this stanza says that, after having entered farther into this wisdom and these trials, they will proceed farther still to a knowledge of the sublime mysteries of God and man, which are sublimest in wisdom, and are hidden in God; and that there they will enter, and the soul will be engulfed and absorbed in them, and that she and the Spouse will rejoice and have pleasure in the sweetness which is caused by the knowledge of them, and of the virtues and attributes of God which are revealed through them in God, such as justice, mercy, wisdom, etc.

**And then we shall go forth To the lofty caverns of the rock . . .**

2. The rock of which she here speaks is Christ, according as Saint Paul says to the Corinthians: *Petra autem erat Christus*.<sup>3</sup> The lofty

<sup>1</sup> In the margin the Saint adds: *Ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus Sanctis, quæ sit longitudo et latitudo, altum et profundum*. In the second redaction he develops this text, without, however, reproducing it in Latin. [See p. 362, below.]

<sup>2</sup> All other versions read: 'and to suffer.' In the Sanlúcar Codex the Saint makes the marginal addition to read as in the text.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians x, 4.

caverns are the lofty and high and deep mysteries in the wisdom of God which are in Christ, concerning the hypostatical union of human nature with the Divine Word, and the correspondence to this which is in the union of men in God, and in the agreement which there is between the justice and mercy of God as to the salvation of the human race in the manifestation of His judgments. These judgments are so high and so deep that they are very properly called lofty caverns: lofty, because of the height of their mysteries; caverns, because of the depth and profundity of their wisdom. For, even as caverns are profound and have many recesses, even so each of the mysteries that are in Christ is most profound in wisdom, and has many recesses, which are His secret judgments of predestination and foreknowledge with respect to the sons of men.<sup>1</sup> Wherefore she says next:

**. . . which are well hidden,**

3. So much so that, despite all the mysteries and wonders which have been discovered by holy doctors and understood by holy souls in this estate of life, there has remained much more to be said, and even to be understood, and thus there are great depths to be fathomed in Christ. For He is like an abundant mine with many recesses containing treasures, of which, for all that men try to fathom them, the end and bottom is never reached; rather in each recess men continue to find new veins of new riches on all sides, as Saint Paul said of Christ Himself in these words: *In quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ Dei, absconditi.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: In Christ dwell hidden all the treasures and wisdom of God, whereinto the soul cannot enter and whereto it cannot attain, unless first, as we have said, it enter and pass into the thicket of exterior and interior suffering; and until God has granted it many other favours, both to the intellect and to the senses, and until many spiritual exercises have been first performed by it. For all these things are inferior,<sup>3</sup> and are preparations for coming to the lofty caverns of the knowledge of the mysteries of Christ, which is the loftiest wisdom attainable in this life. Wherefore, when Moses prayed God to show him His glory, He answered him that he would be unable to see it in this life, but that He would show him 'all good'<sup>4</sup>—all, that is, that in this life is possible. And it came to pass that, after seeing him in the cleft of the rock, which is Christ, as we have said, He showed him His

<sup>1</sup> Lch: 'of predestination and by essence in the eyes (*sic*) of men.'

<sup>2</sup> Colossians iii, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Lch: 'are very old.'

<sup>4</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 19.

back—that is, He gave him a knowledge of the mysteries of His works, especially those of the Incarnation of His Son.

4. Into these clefts, then, the soul desires earnestly to enter, that it may be wholly absorbed<sup>1</sup> and inebriated and transformed in the love of the knowledge thereof, hiding itself in the bosom of its Beloved. And to these clefts He invites it in the Songs, saying: *Surge, propera, amica mea, speciosa mea, et veni: columba mea in foraminibus petrae, in caverna maceriae.*<sup>2</sup> Which is to say: Arise and make haste, My friend, My fair one, and come into the clefts of the rock and into the cavern of the enclosure. These clefts are the caverns which we are describing, whereof the Bride here says:

### And there shall we enter

5. There shall we enter—that is, into that knowledge of Divine mysteries. She says not: ‘I shall enter alone,’ but ‘We shall enter’—that is, she and the Beloved—in order to explain that it is not she who does this, but the Spouse with her; and besides this, inasmuch as God and the soul are already united in one in this estate of the Spiritual Marriage whereof we are speaking, the soul does no work by itself without God. And this which she says ‘There shall we enter’ is as much as to say: There shall we be transformed in the transformation of new knowledge and new acts and communications of love. For, although it is true that the soul, when she says this, is already transformed by reason of the estate aforementioned, though, as we have said, in this wisdom there is naught added to her,<sup>3</sup> it does not therefore follow that she cannot in this estate have new enlightenments and transformations of new kinds of knowledge and Divine light. Indeed she has very frequent illuminations of new mysteries, communicated to her by God in the communication which is ever made between Him and the soul. And this communication He makes to her in Himself, and she enters into Him as it were afresh, according to the knowledge of those mysteries which she knows in Him; and in that knowledge she loves Him afresh most intimately and sublimely, being transformed into Him according to those new kinds of knowledge; and the sweetness and delight, which at that time she receives afresh, are altogether ineffable. Of these she speaks in the line following:

### And taste the new wine of the pomegranates.

<sup>1</sup> Bz, Bj: ‘hidden.’

<sup>2</sup> Canticles ii, 13–14.

<sup>3</sup> The parenthesis ‘though . . . to her’ is an addition of the Saint’s and is found neither in Br, Md nor in the MSS.

6. The pomegranates signify the Divine mysteries of Christ, and the lofty judgments of God, and the virtues and attributes which are known in God through the knowledge of these.<sup>1</sup> For, as the pomegranate has many small seeds, all of which have been born and are nourished in that one round orb,<sup>2</sup> so each virtue and attribute and mystery and judgment of God contains within itself a great multitude of seeds, which are the wondrous ordinances and effects of God, and are contained and nourished in the round or spherical orb<sup>3</sup> which is the virtue and mystery that belongs to those effects. And we refer here to the spherical or circular shape of the pomegranate, because by each pomegranate we here understand one virtue and attribute of God, which attribute or virtue of God is God Himself, which is denoted by the spherical or circular figure, because it has no beginning or end.<sup>4</sup>

7. The new wine of these pomegranates, which the Bride says that they will taste, is the fruition which, in so far as may be in this estate, the soul receives in the knowledge and understanding of them, and the delight of the love of God which she tastes in them. And even as from many pomegranate seeds there comes but one new wine, even so, from all these wonders and grandeurs of God which are known by the soul, there comes forth and overflows for her one fruition and one delight of love alone, which she offers at once to God with great tenderness of the will. This in the Divine Songs she promised to the Spouse, if He granted her these kinds of sublime knowledge, saying: *Ibi me docebis, et dabo tibi poculum ex vino condito, et mustum malorum granatorum meorum.*<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: There Thou shalt teach me, and I will give Thee to drink of spiced wine and the new wine of my pomegranates. She calls them hers, although they are God's, since He has given them to her,<sup>6</sup> and she returns them to God Himself as though they were her own, and this she denotes when she says: 'We will taste the new wine of the pomegranates.' For as He tastes it, He gives it to her to taste, and, as she tastes it, she gives it to Him to taste, so that they both taste of it together.

<sup>1</sup> Md: 'of these mysteries.'

<sup>2</sup> [seno. The same word is rendered 'recess,' above.]

<sup>3</sup> [seno.]

<sup>4</sup> *Venter ejus eburneus, distinctus saphiris*—a marginal note by the Saint.

<sup>5</sup> Canticles viii, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Vd, Br have: 'Since He has found them.'

## STANZA XXXVII

**There wouldst thou show me That which my soul desired,<sup>1</sup>  
And there at once, my life, wouldst thou give me That which  
thou gavest me the other day.**

## EXPOSITION

**T**HE end for which the soul desired to enter those caverns aforementioned was that she might reach (at least in so far as this estate of life permits) the consummation of that which she had ever desired, which is the complete and perfect love communicated in this communication, for love is the end of all;<sup>2</sup> and likewise that she might perfectly attain, after a spiritual manner, the uprightness<sup>3</sup> and cleanness of the estate of original justness. And thus in this stanza she says two things. The first is that there He would show her (namely, in that transformation of knowledge) that which her soul desired in all its acts and intentions,<sup>4</sup> which is to show her how to love her Spouse perfectly as He loves Himself, together with the other things which she expounds in the stanza following. The second is that there, too, He would give her the cleanness and purity which He gave her<sup>5</sup> in the original estate, or on the day of her baptism, cleansing her completely from all her imperfections and darkness as she was cleansed then.<sup>6</sup>

**There wouldst thou show me That which my soul desired,<sup>7</sup>**

2. This desire<sup>8</sup> is the equality of love which the soul ever desires,<sup>9</sup> both naturally and supernaturally, because the lover<sup>10</sup> cannot be satisfied if he feels not that he loves as much as he is loved. And, as the soul sees the truth of the vastness of the love wherewith God loves her,

<sup>1</sup> [The Spanish verb used here, *pretender*, means 'to desire' in the sense of 'to aspire to, aim at' rather than in that of 'to wish for, yearn for,' as elsewhere in the poem.]

<sup>2</sup> This last phrase is an addition made by the Saint and copied nowhere.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the right.'] Md: 'the rectitude.'

<sup>4</sup> Lch: 'in all its interior acts.'

<sup>5</sup> Md adds: 'in her first fathers.'

<sup>6</sup> The Saint adds in the margin the word *calculus*, introducing an idea which he develops in the second redaction (see p. 372, below).

<sup>7</sup> The Saint adds in the margin this note, which he expounds with some fullness in the second redaction (see p. 371, below): 'Although it is true that glory consists in the understanding, the end of the soul is to love.'

<sup>8</sup> [*pretensión.*]

<sup>9</sup> [*desea.*]

<sup>10</sup> Md: 'This desire is the equality or union of love, because the lover . . .', etc.

she desires not to love Him less<sup>1</sup> sublimely and perfectly, to which end she desires present transformation, because the soul cannot reach this equality and completeness of love save by the total transformation of her will in that of God, wherein the two wills are united after such manner that they become one. And thus there is equality of love,<sup>2</sup> for the will of the soul that is converted into the will of God is then wholly the will of God,<sup>3</sup> and the will of the soul is not lost but becomes the will of God. And thus the soul loves God with the will of God, which is also her own will; and thus she will love Him even as much as she is loved by God, since she loves Him with the will of God Himself, in the same love wherewith He loves her, which is the Holy Spirit,<sup>4</sup> Who is given to the soul, even as the Apostle says in these words: *Gratia Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum qui datus est nobis.*<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: The grace of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who is given unto us. And thus the soul loves God in the Holy Spirit together with the Holy Spirit, not by means of Him, as by an instrument, but together with Him, by reason of the transformation, as we shall forthwith explain, and He supplies that which she lacks by her having been transformed in love with Him. Wherefore she says not that He will give her, but that He . . .<sup>6</sup>

3. And it is to be noted that the soul says not here: 'There wouldst Thou give me,' but 'There wouldst Thou show me.' For, although it is true that He gives her His love, yet she says very properly that He shows her love, that is, He shows her how to love Him as He loves Himself; for God, loving us first, shows us how to love Him purely and completely, as He loves us. And since, in this transformation, God, in communicating Himself to the soul, shows her love which is total, generous and pure, wherewith most lovingly He communicates Himself to her wholly, transforming her in Himself, and thus giving her His own love, as we said, wherewith she may love Him, therefore He

<sup>1</sup> Md: '... the truth and vastness of the love wherewith God loves her, she would not, if she could, love Him less . . .', etc. 'Truth and vastness' is altered by the Saint, in the Sanlúcar Codex, to 'truth of the vastness,' and this alteration is followed by G, V, Vd, Br.

<sup>2</sup> Md adds: 'in the sense in which the Apostle said: *Vivo ego, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus*; and thus in this sense there is equality of love.'

<sup>3</sup> G, V, Vd, Br omit 'is then wholly the will of God.'

<sup>4</sup> Md: 'which is also her will, in the sense mentioned, wherefore she will love Him with the loftiest love inspired by the Holy Spirit.'

<sup>5</sup> Romans v, 5.

<sup>6</sup> The whole of this passage ('And thus the soul loves God . . . but that He') is a marginal and interlinear addition, made by the Saint, and found only in the Sanlúcar Codex. The binder's knife has cut off approximately the last line of it.

is really showing her how to love—that is, He is placing an instrument in her hands, telling her how to use it, and continually using it with her,<sup>1</sup> and thus the soul now loves God as much as she is loved by Him.<sup>2</sup> I do not mean that she will love God as much as He loves Himself, for this cannot be, but as much as she is loved by Him; for since she will know God even as she is known of Him, as she says . . .,<sup>3</sup> since the love<sup>4</sup> of them both is one love. Wherefore the soul is not only instructed in loving, but is even made mistress of loving, united with the Master Himself, and consequently satisfied. For she is not satisfied until she comes to this love, which is to love God perfectly, with the same love wherewith He loves Himself,<sup>5</sup> but this cannot come to pass perfectly in this life, although in the estate of perfection, which is that of the Spiritual Marriage whereof we are speaking, it may come to pass after some manner.

4. And in this manner of perfect love there at once results in the soul<sup>6</sup> an intimate and substantial jubilation in God, since it appears, and is true in fact, that the whole substance of the soul, bathed in glory, magnifies God; and she is conscious of an intimate sweetness, after the manner of fruition, which makes her overflow in praising, reverencing, prizing and magnifying God, with great joy and with complete absorption in love. And this comes not to pass save if God has given to the soul in the said estate of transformation great purity, such as was that of the estate of innocence or baptismal cleanness, which the soul says likewise here that the Spouse was to give her immediately in the same transformation of love, saying:

**And there at once, my life, wouldst thou give me That which thou gavest me the other day.<sup>7</sup>**

5. By 'the other day' she denotes the estate of original justness, wherein God gave to her, in Adam, grace and innocence; or the day of baptism, wherein the soul received total cleanness and purity,

<sup>1</sup> This phrase ('and . . . her') is an addition made by the Saint and found in none of the editions or copies.

<sup>2</sup> Md: 'and thus the soul here loves God with sublimest love, like unto that wherewith she is loved by Him.'

<sup>3</sup> At the bottom of the page the Saint wrote the sentence 'I do not . . . as she says' which is here incorporated in the text. Again the binder's knife has cut off the last line of this interpolation.

<sup>4</sup> Over this word, but without erasing it, the Saint has written 'wisdom.'

<sup>5</sup> Md adds: 'in the sense aforementioned, concerning the living of Saint Paul' (see p. 165, n.2, above).

<sup>6</sup> The Saint inserts the words 'in fruition' as a marginal note.

<sup>7</sup> The Saint inserts the word 'predestination' as a marginal note, which he expounds in the second redaction.

which the soul says here in these lines that He would give her at once in the same union of love. And this is that which is understood by what she says in the last line, namely: 'That which thou gavest me the other day'; for, as we have said, to this purity and cleanness the soul attains in this estate of perfection.<sup>1</sup>

STANZA XXXVIII<sup>2</sup>

**The breathing of the air,<sup>3</sup> The song of the sweet philomel,  
The grove and its beauty in the serene night, With a flame that  
consumes and gives no pain.**

## EXPOSITION

**W**E expound two things for which the Bride prayed in the last stanza. The first was that which her soul desired; the second was that<sup>4</sup> which He had given her the other day, whereof, since we have just now described it, there is no need to treat further. But the first petition, wherein she speaks of that which her soul desired, is now described in this stanza. For it is not only<sup>5</sup> the perfect love which we mentioned above, but likewise, as we there observed, all that is contained in this stanza, which is the same love and that which by these means is communicated to the soul; and thus in this stanza she sets down five things, which are all the things that she wished above to make clear that she desired. The first is the breathing of the air, which is the love whereof we have spoken, and that which she principally desires. The second is the song of the philomel, which is jubilation in praise of God. The third is the grove and its beauty, which is the knowledge of the creatures and their order. The fourth is pure and sublime contemplation. And the fifth—namely, the flame

<sup>1</sup> Gr, Lch, Md modify this paragraph thus: 'By "the other day" she denotes the state of original justness, and the day of baptism wherein the soul receives purity, which the soul says will be given her in this union of love; for, as we have said, to this the soul attains in this estate of perfection.' The same reading is found in Bz, Bj, 8,654, save that for 'wherein the soul receives purity' they read: 'wherein the soul receives innocence and purity.'

<sup>2</sup> [For the versions of §§ 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 of this chapter, as given in the Granada group of MSS., see Appendix, pp. 405-7, below.]

<sup>3</sup> Br misreads *del aire* ('of the air') as *deleite* ('delight').

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'was to pray for that...']

<sup>5</sup> Lch, 8,654, Gr, Bj, Md vary these lines thus: 'The first, that which her soul desired. And the other, that which He had given her the other day. Of this second there is no need to treat further, for we have already described it; but that which she desired in the first she now describes in this stanza; for it is not only . . .', etc.

that consumes and gives no pain—is almost contained in the first, for it is a flame of sweet transformation of love in the possession of all these things.

### The breathing of the air,

2. This breathing of the air is a property<sup>1</sup> of the Holy Spirit, for which the soul here prays so that she may love God perfectly. She calls it the breathing of the air, because it is a most delicate touch and feeling of love which habitually in this estate is caused in the soul by the communication of the Holy Spirit. Breathing with that His Divine breath,<sup>2</sup> He raises the soul most sublimely, and informs her, that she may breathe in God the same breath of love that the Father breathes in the Son and the Son in the Father, which is the same Holy Spirit that They breathe into her in the said transformation. For it would not be a true transformation if the soul were not united and transformed in the Holy Spirit as well as in the other two Divine Persons, albeit not in a degree revealed and manifest, by reason of the lowness and the condition of this life. And this is for the soul so high a glory, and so profound and sublime a delight, that it cannot be described by mortal tongue, nor can human understanding, as such, attain to any conception of it.

3. But the soul that is united and transformed<sup>3</sup> in God breathes in God into God the same Divine breath<sup>4</sup> that God, being in her, breathes into her in Himself, which, as I understand, was the meaning of Saint Paul when he said: *Quoniam autem estis filii Dei, misit Deus Spiritum Filii sui in corda vestra clamantem: Abba, Pater.*<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: Because you are sons of God, God sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying in prayer to the Father, which, in the perfect, is according to the manner described. And there is no need to wonder that the soul should be capable of aught so high; for, since God grants her the favour of attaining to being deiform and united in the Most Holy Trinity, wherein she becomes God by participation, how is it a thing incredible that she should perform her work of understanding, knowledge and love in the Trinity, together with It, like the Trinity Itself, by a mode of participation, which God effects in the soul herself?

4. And how this comes to pass cannot be known, nor is it possible

<sup>1</sup> [*habilidad*; lit., 'talent,' 'capacity,' 'accomplishment.']

<sup>2</sup> [*aspiración*. See p. 374, n. 4, below.]

<sup>3</sup> G, V, Vd, Br omit the words 'and transformed.'

<sup>4</sup> [*aspiración*.]

<sup>5</sup> Galatians iv, 6.

to express it, save by describing how the Son of God obtained for us this high estate and merited for us this high office, as Saint John says, of being able to become sons of God.<sup>1</sup> And thus He prayed to the Father, as says the same Saint John, saying: *Pater, volo ut quos dedisti mihi, ut ubi sum ego, et illi sint mecum: ut videant claritatem meam quam dedisti mihi.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me may be also with Me where I am, that they may see the brightness which Thou gavest Me. That is to say, that they may work in Us by participation the same work which I do by nature, which is the breathing of the Holy Spirit. And He says further: 'I pray not, Father, only for these that are present, but for them also who, through their teaching, shall believe in Me, that they may all be one and the same thing; so that as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I am in Thee, even so may they be one and the same thing in Us; and I have given them the brightness which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one and the same thing, as We are one and the same thing; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfect in one; that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me';<sup>3</sup> namely, by communicating to them the same love as to the Son, though not naturally, as to the Son, but, as we have said, by unity and transformation of love. It is not to be understood here that the Son means to say to the Father that the saints are to be one thing in essence and nature, as are the Father and the Son; but rather that they are to be so by union of love, as are the Father and the Son in unity of love. Wherefore souls possess these same blessings by participation as He possesses by nature; for the which cause they are truly gods by participation, equals of God and His companions.<sup>4</sup> Wherefore Saint Peter said: 'Grace and peace be complete and perfect in you in the knowledge of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord, according as all things are given to us of His Divine virtue for life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us with His own glory and virtue; whereby He has given unto us most great and precious promises, that by these things we may be made companions of the Divine nature';<sup>5</sup> which is for the soul to have participation in God, performing in Him, in company with Him, the work of the Most Holy Trinity, after the manner whereof we have spoken, by reason of the substantial union between the soul and God. And, though this can be

<sup>1</sup> St. John i, 12.<sup>2</sup> St. John xvii, 24.<sup>3</sup> St. John xvii, 20-3.<sup>4</sup> [por lo cual verdaderamente son dioses por participación, iguales y compañeros suyos de Dios.]<sup>5</sup> 2 St. Peter i, 2-4.

perfectly fulfilled only in the next life, nevertheless, in this life, when the estate of perfection is reached, a clear trace and taste of it are attained, after the manner that we are describing, albeit, as we have said, this cannot be expressed.

5. O souls created for these grandeurs and called thereto! What do ye do? Wherein do ye occupy yourselves? Your desires<sup>1</sup> are mean-nesses, and your possessions miseries. O wretched blindness of the eyes of your souls, which are blind to so great a light and deaf to so clear a voice, seeing not that for so long as ye seek grandeurs and glories ye remain miserable and deprived of so many blessings, and have become ignorant and unworthy! There follows the second thing for which the soul prays, namely:

### The song of the sweet philomel,

6. That which is born in the soul from that breathing of the air is the song of the sweet philomel; for, even as the song of the philomel, which is the nightingale,<sup>2</sup> is heard in the spring, when the cold and the rains of the winter are all past, and makes melody to the ear and gives refreshment to the spirit, even so in this present communication and transformation of love the Bride is protected and freed from all temporal changes and disturbances, and detached and purged from all the imperfections and penalties and mists<sup>3</sup> of her nature, and feels the new spring in her spirit, wherein she hears the sweet voice of the Spouse, Who is her sweet philomel, refreshing and renewing the substance of her soul, saying: 'Arise, make haste, My friend,<sup>4</sup> My dove, My beautiful one, and come; for the winter is now past, the rains are now over and gone far away, the flowers have now appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come, and the voice of the little turtle-dove has been heard in our land.'<sup>5</sup>

7. In this voice of the Spouse, Who speaks to the Bride in the inmost part of the soul, she perceives the end of her ills and the beginning of her blessings; and in the refreshment and protection and delectable feeling which this causes her she likewise lifts up her voice, as does the sweet philomel, in a new song to God, which unites with the song<sup>6</sup> that causes it. For He gives her a voice, that<sup>7</sup> she may sing to God with

<sup>1</sup> [*pretensiones*, the substantive of *pretender*; see p. 164, n. 1, above.]

<sup>2</sup> [The Saint uses the poetical word *filomena* throughout, except here, where he explains it by the popular word *ruiseñor*, nightingale.]

<sup>3</sup> [*nieblas*, see p. 101, n. 4, above.]

<sup>4</sup> [See p. 351, n. 7, below.]

<sup>5</sup> Canticles ii, 10-12.

<sup>6</sup> [Or: 'with Him.']

<sup>7</sup> Br: 'For, if He gives her a voice, it is that . . .' Vd: 'For He gives her a voice so that . . .' G, V: 'For He gives her His voice, so that . . .'

Him, for that is His aspiration<sup>1</sup> and desire. This is also the desire of the same Spouse in the Songs, when He speaks with her and says: 'Arise, make haste, My friend, and come, My dove, into the clefts of the rock and the cavern of the enclosure; show Me thy face, let thy voice sound in Mine ears, for thy voice is sweet and thy face comely.'<sup>2</sup> By the ears of God are here meant the desires of God, that we may praise Him perfectly; for the voice for which He here asks the Bride is perfect praise and jubilation in God, the which voice, that it may be perfect, the Spouse bids the soul to send forth and cause to sound in the caverns of the rock, which are the loving knowledge of the mysteries of Christ, wherein we said above that the soul was united with Him. For, because in this union the soul rejoices and praises God together with God Himself, as we said in speaking of their love, it is perfect praise, for the soul, being in perfection, performs works which are perfect. And thus this voice is very sweet to God and to the soul, wherefore there follow the words: 'for thy voice is sweet.' That is to say, not only for thee, but also for Me; for, being at one with Me, thou dost raise thy voice as a sweet philomel in unison with Me.

### **The grove and its beauty**

8. The third thing which the soul says that they are to show her there, by means of love, is the grove and its beauty. By the grove is here understood God, together with all the creatures that are in Him; for, even as all the trees and plants have their life and root in the grove, so the creatures, celestial and terrestrial alike, have their root and their life in God. This, then, the soul says: that she will show herself there to God inasmuch as He is life and being to all the creatures, for she knows that in Him are the beginning and the duration of them and for them, for without Him naught is given to the soul, nor does she believe herself able to know them in the spiritual way. The soul also greatly desires to see the beauty of the grove; this is the grace and wisdom and beauty which not only does each of the creatures have from God, but which they cause among themselves in their wise and ordered mutual correspondence, both of the higher creatures and of the lower; this is to know the creatures by the contemplative way, which is a thing of great delight, for it is to have knowledge concerning God. And thus follows the fourth thing:

### **In the serene night,**

<sup>1</sup> [*pretensión.*]

<sup>2</sup> Canticles ii, 13.

9. This night, wherein the soul desires to see these things, is contemplation; for contemplation is dark, and for that reason is called by its other name, 'mystical theology,' which signifies secret and hidden wisdom of God, wherein without noise of words and without the service and aid of any bodily or spiritual sense, as in the silence and quiet of the night, hidden by darkness from all that is of the senses and of nature, God teaches the soul after a most hidden and secret manner, without her knowing how; this is that which some spiritual men call 'understanding yet understanding not.' For this is not done by the active understanding, as the philosophers call it, which works in forms and fancies and apprehensions of things; but it is done in the understanding inasmuch as it is possible<sup>1</sup> and passive, when, without receiving such forms, it passively receives substantial knowledge, which is given to it without any active office or work of its own.

10. And for this cause, not only is this contemplation called night, but likewise serene. For, even as the night is called serene because it is free from clouds and vapours in the air, which are the things that disturb the serenity of the night, so this night of contemplation is, to the sight of the understanding, empty of and withdrawn from all clouds<sup>2</sup> of forms and fancies and particular knowledge which may enter by the senses, and is clean likewise of all kinds of vapour from the affections and desires. Wherefore contemplation is serene night to the natural understanding and sense, even as the philosopher teaches, saying that even as the ray of the sun is dark and black to the eye of the bat,<sup>3</sup> even so the lofty and bright things of God are dark to our understanding.

**With a flame that consumes and gives no pain.**

11. All the last-named things the soul begs the Spouse here in this line to give her, together with a flame that consumes and gives no pain; by the which flame is here understood the love of God now perfect in the soul. For, in order to be perfect, it must have these two properties, namely that it may consume and transform the soul in God and that the enkindling and transformation of this flame in the soul may give no pain; and thus this flame is sweet love; for in the transformation of the soul therein there is conformity and satisfaction on either side, and therefore there is no pain caused by difference between the greater and the less, as there was before the soul attained to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 79, above.

<sup>2</sup> [*nubes.*]

<sup>3</sup> *Metaph.*, Bk. I, Chap. ii. Cf. also St. Thomas, *Summa*, Pt. I, q. xii, a. I. This Aristotelian principle the Saint adduces on various occasions in his writings.

capacity of this perfect love. For, now that the soul has attained, it is as completely transformed and brought into conformity with God as is the burning coal with the fire, without that smoking and flaming<sup>1</sup> that it gave forth before it was in that condition, and without the darkness and accidents proper to it which it had before the fire had entered into it completely. These properties of darkness, smoking and flaming<sup>2</sup> the soul habitually has, with a certain pain and fatigue as concerning the love of God, until it arrive at such a degree of perfection of love that the fire of love, fully and completely,<sup>3</sup> possesses it, and that gently,<sup>4</sup> without the pain of smoke and of the natural accidents and passions, but transformed into a gentle<sup>5</sup> flame, which has consumed it with respect to all this, and has changed it into God, wherein its movements and actions are now Divine.

12. It is in this flame that the Bride desires the Spouse to give her, as we have said, all the things to which she aspires, for she desires neither to possess them nor to esteem nor to enjoy them without the perfect and sweet<sup>6</sup> love of God.

STANZA XXXIX<sup>7</sup>

**For none saw it, Neither did Aminadab appear,  
And there was a rest from the siege, And the cavalry came  
down at the sight of the waters.**

## EXPOSITION

**I**N this last stanza the soul desires to describe the preparation which is now hers for receiving the favours which are enjoyed in this estate and for which she has prayed the Spouse. Without such preparation she could not receive these favours, nor preserve them within her, and thus she sets before the Beloved four kinds of preparation or things which are convenient and sufficient for the favours aforementioned, in order to constrain Him the more to give them to her, as has been said.<sup>8</sup> The first thing is that her soul is detached and

<sup>1</sup> G, V: 'gleaming.'

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Br: 'amply.'

<sup>4</sup> [Or 'sweetly': *suavemente*.]

<sup>5</sup> [Or 'sweet': *suave*; as in 'sweet love' above.]

<sup>6</sup> [*suave*.] G, V, Vd, Br omit 'and sweet.'

<sup>7</sup> [For the version of §§ 3, 4, 5, 6 of this chapter in the Granada group of MSS. see Appendix, pp. 407-8, below.]

<sup>8</sup> Bj, Bz omit the words 'in order . . . has been said.'

far withdrawn from all things; the second, that the devil has now been conquered and put to flight; the third, that the passions of the soul and the spiritual and natural desires<sup>1</sup> are now held in bondage; the fourth, that the sensual part of the soul has now been reformed and purified in conformity with the spiritual part, so that not only is it not disturbed by the spirit, but it is rather united<sup>2</sup> therewith, and has become a partaker of its blessings. And this she says in the stanza aforementioned, in these words:

**For none saw it,<sup>3</sup>**

2. This is as though she were to say: My soul is now so completely alone and withdrawn and detached from all created things, both above and below, and has entered so far into recollection with Thee, that none of the said things can come within sight of it—that is, they cannot move it by their sweetness to desire them, nor by their wretchedness and misery to dislike and be troubled by them; for my soul is so far from them that they remain far behind and are lost from sight. Not only so, but

**Neither did Aminadab appear,**

3. This Aminadab, in Divine Scripture, signifies the devil, who is the adversary of the Bride-Soul, and who was ever giving her battle and disturbing her with the innumerable munitions of his temptations and snares, that she might not enter into this fortress and secret place of interior recollection with the Beloved. The soul placed herein is so greatly favoured and so strong in virtues and victories that the devil dares not appear before her. Wherefore, since she is in the favour of such an embrace, and since she has also gained a perfect victory over the devil in the exercise of the virtues, so that he has now been put to flight through the strength of her virtues, he no longer appears before her. Thus the Bride well says that neither did Aminadab appear.

**And there was a rest from the siege,**

4. By this siege she here understands<sup>4</sup> the passions and desires of the soul, which, when they are not conquered and mortified, besiege and give battle to it round about, wherefore she calls them the siege.

<sup>1</sup> G, V, Vd, Br omit the words 'and the . . . desires.'

<sup>2</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'is rather one.'

<sup>3</sup> G, V omit this line and the commentary on it.

<sup>4</sup> V, Vd: 'By which she here understands, as I think . . .', etc. Br: 'By which I think she understands here . . .', etc. G: 'By which she understands here, as I understand, those passions . . .', etc.

From this siege she says, too, that there is now a rest; and begs that, since this is so, the Spouse will not fail to communicate and grant her the favours for which she has prayed Him, since the siege aforementioned can no longer hinder the inward peace which she needs in order to receive them, possess them and preserve them. This she says because in this estate it is needful that the passions of the soul should be set at rest, and the desires and affections mortified, so that they can neither disturb the soul nor make war upon it, but that this entire siege aforementioned, with its operations, may be in conformity with the inward spirit, and after this manner the soul<sup>1</sup> may be recollected and enjoy the delights which are enjoyed by the spirit. For this reason she says next:

**And the cavalry came down at the sight of the waters.**

5. By these waters she here understands the spiritual delights and blessings of God whereof in this estate the soul has fruition. By the cavalry are understood the faculties of the sensual part, both interior and exterior, which, says the Bride, come down in this estate at the sight of these spiritual waters. For the sensual part of the soul is so purified and spiritualized in this estate that the soul with its sensual<sup>2</sup> faculties and natural forces is recollected and has participation and fruition, after its manner, of the spiritual grandeurs which God is communicating to the spirit, even as David indicated when he said: *Cor meum et caro mea exultaverunt in Deum vivum.*<sup>3</sup> Which is to say: My spirit and my flesh have rejoiced and delighted in the living God.

6. And it is to be noted that the Bride says not here that the cavalry came down to taste of the waters, but that it came down at the sight of them. For this sensual part with its faculties cannot essentially and properly taste of spiritual blessings because they have not a proportionate capacity for this, either in this life or in the next; but through a certain overflowing of the spirit they receive therefrom refreshment and delight, whereby these faculties and senses of the body are attracted<sup>4</sup> into that interior recollection, wherein the soul is drinking of<sup>5</sup> spiritual blessings. This is to come down at the sight of them rather than to taste of them essentially,<sup>6</sup> though they taste, as we have said, of the overflowing which is communicated from the soul to them. And the

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'they.']

<sup>2</sup> Br omits 'sensual.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxxxiii, 3 [A.V., lxxxiv, 2].

<sup>4</sup> G, V, Vd, Br read erroneously *attributdas* ('attributed') for *attraldas* ('attracted').

<sup>5</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'receiving.'

<sup>6</sup> Br: 'to taste essence of them.'

soul says here that they came down, and she uses no other word, in order to signify that all these faculties descend and come down from their natural operations, from which they cease, to interior recollection; whereto may the Lord Jesus,<sup>1</sup> the sweetest Spouse, be pleased to bring all such as invoke His Most Holy Name, to Whom belong honour and glory together with the Father and the Holy Spirit *in sæcula sæculorum*. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G, V, Vd, Br: 'the Lord Jesus Christ.'

<sup>2</sup> Bj, G, V, Vd, Br, Md add: 'Laus Deo.' Lch: 'Soli Deo honor et gloria.' Gr, 8,654: 'Finis.'

# SPIRITUAL CANTICLE

## (SECOND REDACTION)

*Exposition of the stanzas which treat of the exercise of love between the Soul and Christ the Spouse, wherein are touched upon and expounded some points and effects of prayer, at the request of Mother Ana de Jesús, Prioress of the Discalced at San José of Granada. The year 1584.*<sup>1</sup>

## PROLOGUE<sup>2</sup>

FORASMUCH as these stanzas, religious Mother,<sup>3</sup> appear to be written with a certain degree of fervour of love for God, Whose wisdom and love are so vast that, as is said in the Book of Wisdom,<sup>4</sup> they reach from one end to another, and the soul which is informed and moved by Him has to some extent this same abundance and impetus in its words, I do not now think of expounding all the breadth and plenteousness imbued in them by the fertile spirit of love—it would rather be ignorance to think that sayings of love understood mystically, such as those of the present stanzas, can be fairly explained by words of any kind. For the Spirit of the Lord, Who helps our infirmity, as Saint Paul says, dwells in us and makes intercession for us, with groanings unutterable, pleading for that which we cannot well understand or comprehend, so as to express it ourselves.<sup>5</sup> For who can write down that which He reveals to loving souls wherein He dwells? And who can set forth in words that which He makes them to feel? And lastly, who can express that which He makes them to desire? Of a surety, none; nay, indeed, not the very souls through whom He passes. It is for this reason that, by means of figures, comparisons and similitudes, they allow something of that which they feel to overflow, and utter secrets and mysteries from the abundance of their spirits rather than

<sup>1</sup> As to this title there are variants in the Codices, but all readings are substantially the same. A merely says: 'Illuminative Way. Prologue to M. Ana de Jesús, Discalced Carmelite Nun.'

<sup>2</sup> S omits the prologue and the forty stanzas which follow. Bg omits the prologue and puts the stanzas at the end. G, Ej omit the prologue.

<sup>3</sup> S omits 'religious Mother.'

<sup>4</sup> Wisdom viii, 1.

<sup>5</sup> [Romans viii, 26.]

explain these things rationally. These similitudes, if they be not read with the simplicity of the spirit of love and understanding embodied in them, appear to be nonsense rather than the expression of reason, as may be seen in the divine Songs of Solomon and in other books of Divine Scripture, where, since the Holy Spirit cannot express<sup>1</sup> the abundance of His meaning in common and vulgar terms, He utters<sup>2</sup> mysteries in strange figures and similitudes.<sup>3</sup> Whence it follows that no words of holy doctors, albeit they have said much and may yet say more, can ever expound these things fully, neither could they be expounded in words of any kind. That which is expounded of them, therefore, is ordinarily the least part of that which they contain.

2. Since these stanzas, therefore, have been composed under the influence of a love which comes from abounding mystical understanding, they cannot be fairly expounded, nor shall I attempt so to expound them, but only to throw upon them some general light<sup>4</sup> (since your Reverence has so desired).<sup>5</sup> And this I think to be best, for the sayings of love are better expounded<sup>6</sup> in their fullness, so that everyone may pluck advantage from them according to the manner and to the measure of his spirit, than abbreviated in a sense to which not every taste can accommodate itself. And thus, although they are expounded after a certain manner, there is no reason why anyone should be bound to this exposition. For mystical wisdom (which comes through love, whereof the present stanzas treat) needs not to be understood distinctly in order to produce love and affection in the soul; it is like to faith, whereby we love God without understanding Him.<sup>7</sup>

3. I shall therefore be very brief, although I shall be unable to refrain from extending myself in certain places where the matter requires it, and where occasion offers to expound and treat certain points and effects of prayer, for since there are many such in the Stanzas I cannot refrain from treating of some. But I shall leave aside the commonest of them, and treat briefly the most extraordinary, which come to pass in those that, by the favour of God, have left behind the beginners' state. And this for two reasons: the one, that there are so many things written for beginners; the other, that I speak herein with your Reverence by your command, and to your Reverence Our Lord

<sup>1</sup> B: 'since the Holy Spirit desires not to express . . .'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'the Holy Spirit utters . . .'

<sup>3</sup> A abbreviates: 'in vulgar terms and similitudes, it follows thence that no words . . .', etc.

<sup>4</sup> A, Av, B, Bz, S: 'some light of a general kind.'

<sup>5</sup> S omits the words in brackets.

<sup>6</sup> Bz, S: 'better left.'

<sup>7</sup> S adds: 'clearly.'

has granted the favour of drawing you forth from these beginnings and leading you<sup>1</sup> farther inward to the bosom of His Divine love. Thus I trust that, although I may write here of certain points of scholastic theology concerning the interior commerce of the soul with its God, it will not be in vain to have talked somewhat after the manner of pure spirit; for though your Reverence may lack<sup>2</sup> the practice of scholastic theology whereby are comprehended Divine verities, yet you lack not that of mystical theology, which is attained through love, and wherein these verities are not only known but also experienced.

4. And to the end that all I say (which I desire to submit to better judgment, and entirely so to that of Holy Mother Church) may be the better received, I think not to affirm aught that is mine,<sup>3</sup> trusting to my own experience, or to that of other spiritual persons<sup>4</sup> of which I have known, or to that which I have heard from them (although I purpose to profit by both) unless it be confirmed and expounded by authorities from Divine Scripture, at the least in those things which appear to be<sup>5</sup> the most difficult of comprehension. Wherein I shall follow this manner—to wit, that first I shall set down the texts in their Latin and then shall expound them with respect to the subject which they illustrate. And first I shall set down all the Stanzas together, and then in order shall set down each one separately with intent to expound it; whereof I shall expound each line, setting it down at the beginning of its exposition.

#### END OF THE PROLOGUE

### SONGS BETWEEN THE SOUL AND THE SPOUSE<sup>6</sup>

#### BRIDE<sup>7</sup>

**I. Whither hast thou hidden thyself, And hast left me, O Beloved, to my sighing?**

**Thou didst flee like the hart, having wounded me:<sup>8</sup> I went out after thee, calling, and thou wert gone.<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> S modifies: 'that I speak herein with persons to whom Our Lord has granted the favour of having drawn them forth from these beginnings and led them farther inward . . .', etc.

<sup>2</sup> S: 'for though some may lack . . . they lack not . . .', etc.

<sup>3</sup> S omits 'that is mine.'

<sup>4</sup> Av, Bz: 'other particular spiritual persons.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'which are.'

<sup>6</sup> Thus Jaén, A, Av, B, Bz, S. The other versions differ very slightly.

<sup>7</sup> This word is found only in Jaén, A, S.

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G: 'leaving me wounded.'

<sup>9</sup> G, S: 'and thou wert already gone.' Ej: 'thou wert already gone.'

2. Shepherds, ye that go Yonder, through the sheepcotes, to the hill,  
If perchance ye see him that I most love, Tell ye him that I languish, suffer and die.
3. Seeking my loves, I will go o'er yonder mountains and banks;  
I will neither pluck the flowers nor fear the wild beasts; I will pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.
4. O woods and thickets Planted by the hand of the Beloved!<sup>1</sup>  
O meadow of verdure, enamelled with flowers, Say if he has passed by you.
5. Scattering a thousand graces, He passed through these groves in haste,  
And, looking upon them as he went, Left them, by his glance<sup>2</sup> alone, clothed with beauty.<sup>3</sup>
6. Ah, who will be able to heal me! Surrender thou thyself now completely.<sup>4</sup>  
From to-day do thou send me now<sup>5</sup> no other messenger, For they cannot tell me what I wish.
7. And all those that serve<sup>6</sup> Relate<sup>7</sup> to me a thousand graces of thee,  
And all wound me the more And something<sup>8</sup> that they are stammering leaves me dying.
8. But how, O life,<sup>9</sup> dost thou persevere, Since thou livest not where thou livest,  
And since the arrows make thee to die which thou receivest From the conceptions of the Beloved which thou formest within thee?
9. Since thou hast wounded this heart,<sup>10</sup> Wherefore didst thou not heal it?  
And wherefore, having robbed me of it, hast thou left it thus And takest not the prey that thou hast spoiled?

<sup>1</sup> Bg: 'of my Beloved.'<sup>3</sup> Ej, G: 'with his beauty.'<sup>4</sup> [Cf. p. 26, n. 5.]<sup>2</sup> [See p. 26, n. 3, above.]<sup>5</sup> A omits 'now.'<sup>6</sup> A: 'that go down' [*bajan* for *vagan*]. Ej has *vacan*, on which see the Saint's commentary, pp. 216-7, below.<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'are relating.']<sup>8</sup> Av inserts *ya* ('already,' 'now').<sup>9</sup> B: 'O soul.'<sup>10</sup> G: 'this my heart.'

- 10.<sup>1</sup> Quench thou my griefs, Since none suffices to remove  
 them,  
 And let mine eyes behold thee, Since thou art their light  
 and for thee alone I wish to have them.
11. Reveal thy presence And let the vision of thee and thy  
 beauty slay me;  
 Behold, the affliction of love is not cured Save by thy  
 presence and thy form.
12. O crystalline fount, If on that thy silvered surface  
 Thou wouldst of a sudden form the eyes desired Which I  
 bear outlined in my inmost parts!
13. Withdraw them, Beloved, for I fly away.

SPOUSE<sup>2</sup>

- Return thou, dove,  
 For the wounded hart appears on the hill At the air of thy  
 flight, and takes refreshment.
14. My Beloved, the mountains,<sup>3</sup> The solitary, wooded<sup>4</sup>  
 valleys,  
 The strange islands, the sonorous rivers, The whisper of  
 the amorous breezes,
15. The tranquil night, At the time of the rising of the dawn,  
 The silent music, the sounding solitude, The supper that  
 recreates and enkindles love.
16. Drive us away the foxes, For our vineyard is now in flower,  
 While we make a bunch of roses, And let none appear upon  
 the hill.<sup>5</sup>
17. Stay thee, dead north wind. Come, south wind, that  
 awakenest love;<sup>6</sup>  
 Breathe through my garden and let thy odours<sup>7</sup> flow, And  
 the Beloved shall pasture among the flowers.

<sup>1</sup> A omits this stanza.

<sup>2</sup> This word is found only in Jaén and S. The latter repeats it [at intervals in the poem; cf. pp. 27-9, above], but we follow the Jaén readings in the text.

<sup>3</sup> B has: 'Beholding the mountains,' and omits 'My Beloved.'

<sup>4</sup> A has *tremerosos* ('trembling') for *memorosos* ('wooded').

<sup>5</sup> A, Bz: 'upon the countryside.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'loves.'] B, Bg: 'that recreate loves.'

<sup>7</sup> Thus Jaén, S. The other versions have 'its odours.'

18. O nymphs of Judæa, While mid the flowers and rose-trees  
the ambar sends forth perfume,  
Dwell in the outskirts And desire not to touch our thresholds.
19. Hide thyself, dearest one, And look with thy face upon the  
mountains,  
And desire not to speak, But look upon her companions<sup>1</sup>  
who travels mid strange islands.
20. Birds of swift wing,<sup>2</sup> Lions, harts, leaping does,  
Mountains, valleys, banks, waters, breezes, heats,<sup>3</sup> And  
terrors that keep watch by night.
21. By the pleasant lyres And by the sirens' song, I conjure  
you,  
Cease your wrath<sup>4</sup> and touch not the wall, That the Bride<sup>5</sup>  
may sleep more securely.
22. The Bride has entered Into the pleasant garden of her  
desire,<sup>6</sup>  
And at her pleasure rests, Her neck reclining on the gentle  
arms of the Beloved.
23. Beneath the apple-tree, There wert thou betrothed to me;  
There did I give thee my hand And thou wert redeemed  
where thy mother had been corrupted.
24. Our flowery bed, Encompassed with dens of lions,  
Hung with purple<sup>7</sup> and builded in peace, Crowned with a  
thousand shields of gold.
25. In the track<sup>8</sup> of thy footprint The young girls run along by  
the way.<sup>9</sup>  
At the touch of a spark, at the spiced wine, Flows forth<sup>10</sup>  
the Divine balsam.
26. In the inner cellar, of my Beloved have I drunk, And,  
when I went forth over all this meadow,  
Then<sup>11</sup> knew I naught And lost the flock which I followed  
aforetime.

<sup>1</sup> Av, B, Bz: 'countries.'<sup>3</sup> Av, Bz, G: 'breezes, waters, heats.'<sup>5</sup> G: 'That the Spouse.'<sup>7</sup> B, Bg: 'dyed in purple.'<sup>8</sup> [Or simply 'behind,' 'after,' as in the current Spanish phrase.]<sup>9</sup> Ej: 'The young girls discover [or reveal] the way.' G: 'The youths discover [or reveal] the way.'<sup>10</sup> [Lit., 'emissions of,' without a verb.]<sup>11</sup> B, Bg substitute *yo* [emphatic form of 'I'] for *ya* ('then').<sup>2</sup> [Lit., 'the light birds.']<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'Let your wraths cease.']<sup>6</sup> [Lit., 'pleasant desired garden.']

27. There he gave me his breast; There he taught me a science  
most delectable;  
And I gave myself to him indeed, reserving nothing;  
There I promised him to be his bride.
28. My soul has employed itself And all my possessions in his  
service:  
Now I guard no flock nor have I now other office, For now  
my exercise is in loving alone.<sup>1</sup>
29. If, then, on the common land, From henceforth I am  
neither seen nor found,  
You will say that I am lost; That, wandering love-stricken,  
I lost my way and was found.<sup>2</sup>
30. With flowers and emeralds<sup>3</sup> Gathered in the cool  
mornings  
We will make the garlands flowering in thy love And  
interwoven with one hair from my head.
31. By that hair alone Which thou regardedst fluttering on my  
neck,  
Beholding it upon my neck, thou wert captivated, And  
wert wounded by one of mine eyes.
32. When thou didst look on<sup>4</sup> me, Thine eyes imprinted upon  
me their grace;<sup>5</sup>  
For this cause didst thou love me greatly, Whereby mine  
eyes deserved to adore that which they saw in thee.
33. Despise me not, For, if thou didst find me swarthy,  
Now canst thou indeed look upon me,<sup>6</sup> Since thou didst  
look upon me and leave in me grace and beauty.
34. The little white dove Has returned to the ark with the  
bough,  
And now the turtle-dove Has found the mate of her  
desire<sup>7</sup> on the green banks.

<sup>1</sup> A: 'is to fall in love.'

<sup>2</sup> [*ganada. Lit.*, 'gained.' Ej reads, however, *hallada*, 'found.')

<sup>3</sup> Bg read: 'With enamelled flowers,' but is corrected in MS. to the reading in the text.

<sup>4</sup> [The verb is *mirar*, more conveniently translated 'regard' in Stanza XXXI and its commentary.]

<sup>5</sup> Bg: 'thy grace.'

<sup>6</sup> B: 'Now indeed wilt thou be able to look upon me.'

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'her desired mate.'] Bg has the slight variant *El ocio* for *Al socio* and reads: 'Has found the desired peace.'

35. In solitude she lived And in solitude now has built her nest,  
And in solitude her dear one alone guides her, Who like-  
wise in solitude was wounded by love.
36. Let us rejoice, Beloved, And let us go to see ourselves in thy  
beauty,  
To the mountain and the hill where flows the pure water;  
Let us enter farther into the thicket.
37. And then we shall go forth To the lofty caverns of the  
rock which are well hidden,  
And there shall we enter And taste the new wine of the  
pomegranates.
38. There wouldst thou show me That which my soul desired,<sup>1</sup>  
And there at once, my life, wouldst thou give me That  
which thou gavest me the other day.
39. The breathing of the air, The song of the sweet philomel,  
The grove and its beauty in the serene night, With a  
flame that consumes and gives<sup>2</sup> no pain.
40. For none saw it, Neither did Aminadab appear,  
And there was a rest from the siege,<sup>3</sup> And the cavalry came  
down<sup>4</sup> at the sight of the waters.

<sup>1</sup> [The verb is not *desear*, but *pretender*, to aim at, lay claim to, strive for.]

<sup>2</sup> G has 'consumes' in the indicative and 'gives' in the subjunctive [thus making the latter verb more indefinite than the former].

<sup>3</sup> Bg has (*ciervo* for *cierco*) 'And the hart was at rest.'

<sup>4</sup> [See p. 30, n. 5.] Av, Bz have: 'appeared.'

## ARGUMENT<sup>1</sup>

THE order which these Stanzas follow is from the time when a soul begins to serve God until it reaches the last estate<sup>2</sup> of perfection, which is the Spiritual Marriage; and thus there are touched upon in them the three estates or ways of spiritual exercise through the which the soul passes until it reaches the said estate; which are the Purgative, the Illuminative and the Unitive; and concerning each of these are expounded certain of its properties and effects.<sup>3</sup>

2. The earliest of these Stanzas treat of beginners—that is, of the Purgative Way. Those that come next treat of progressives,<sup>4</sup> where the Spiritual Betrothal<sup>5</sup> is made, and this is the Illuminative Way. After these, those that follow treat of the Unitive Way, which is that of the perfect, wherein is made the Spiritual Marriage. This Unitive Way, or that of the perfect, follows the Illuminative Way, which is that of progressives;<sup>6</sup> and the last stanzas treat of the beatific estate, to which only the soul in that perfect estate aspires.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G, Ej: 'Prologue to the reader.'

<sup>2</sup> G: 'degree.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'of their properties and effects.'

<sup>4</sup> [*aprovechados*. This is sometimes translated 'adepts,' but 'progressives' is a more exact rendering when referring to the second of the three traditional mystical states.]

<sup>5</sup> G: 'matrimony.' [This is, of course, an error.]

<sup>6</sup> Sg omits the words: 'which . . . progressives.' Bg omits: 'which is that . . . Unitive Way,' an evident slip by the copyist, who skipped the words between two identical phrases.

<sup>7</sup> Ej reproduces the first of these two paragraphs almost as it stands above, but without the enumeration of the three Ways. The second paragraph it shortens considerably [without any great loss to the sense], and adds that in the stanzas relating to the Unitive Way 'are related many properties and praises of God' and that the Spiritual Marriage is 'that which one may reach in this life.'

# BEGINNETH THE EXPOSITION OF THE STANZAS BETWEEN THE BRIDE AND CHRIST THE SPOUSE<sup>1</sup>

## ANNOTATION<sup>2</sup>

**T**HE soul, taking account of her obligations, seeing that life is short<sup>3</sup> and the path of eternal life<sup>4</sup> narrow,<sup>5</sup> that the just man is scarcely saved,<sup>6</sup> that the things of the world are vain and deceitful, that everything comes to an end and fails like running water,<sup>7</sup> that time is uncertain, the account strict, perdition very easy, salvation very difficult; knowing, on the other hand, the great debt that she owes to God for that He has created her for Himself alone, for which she owes Him the service of her whole life, and for that He has redeemed her for Himself alone, for which she owes Him all the rest of the love of her will,<sup>8</sup> and the return of His love to her, and for a thousand other benefits wherein she knows that she has been indebted to God since before her birth; and that a great part of her life has vanished,<sup>9</sup> and that for all this she must give an account and reason, for the first as for the last, even to the uttermost farthing,<sup>10</sup> when God shall search Jerusalem with lighted candles;<sup>11</sup> and that it is now late and perchance the end of the day;<sup>12</sup> in order to remedy so much evil and harm, especially as she feels God to be very far distant<sup>13</sup> and hidden, since she has been content to forget Him so much among the creatures, she is touched with fear and inward grief of heart at so great perdition and peril, and

<sup>1</sup> S: 'Beginneth the Exposition of the Stanzas.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'Annotation to the stanza following, which is the first.' A, B, Bg do not copy the word 'Annotation.'

<sup>3</sup> Job xiv, 5.

<sup>4</sup> B: 'the eternal path.' A, Bg: 'the path [narrow].'

<sup>5</sup> St. Matthew vii, 14.

<sup>6</sup> 1 St. Peter iv, 18.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Kings [A.V., 2 Samuel] xiv, 14.

<sup>8</sup> A, Av, G, Sg omit: 'of the love.' Ej modifies: 'and for His having redeemed her, for the which she has still not the wherewithal to pay God, and a thousand other benefits.'

[The text reads literally: 'the rest and return of the love of her will.']

<sup>9</sup> [Lit., 'has gone away into the air.']

<sup>10</sup> St. Matthew v, 26.

<sup>11</sup> Sophonias i, 12.

<sup>12</sup> St. Matthew xx, 6.

<sup>13</sup> J, S: 'to be very wroth.'

renounces all things, ceases from all business and delays not a day neither an hour. Then, with yearning and sighs that come from the heart, wounded now with love for God, she begins to invoke her Beloved, and says:

### STANZA THE FIRST

**Whither hast thou hidden thyself, And hast left me, O Beloved,  
to my sighing?  
Thou didst flee like the hart, having wounded me:<sup>1</sup> I went out  
after thee, calling, and thou wert gone.<sup>2</sup>**

#### EXPOSITION

2. In this first stanza, the soul that is enamoured<sup>3</sup> of the Word, the Son of God, her Spouse, desiring to be united with Him through clear and essential vision,<sup>4</sup> sets forth her love's anxieties, reproaching Him for His absence, the more so because, since He has pierced and wounded<sup>5</sup> her with love for Him, for the which she has abandoned all created things, yea even herself, she has still to suffer the absence of her Beloved and is not yet loosed<sup>6</sup> from her mortal flesh that she may be able to have fruition of Him in the glory of eternity. And thus she says:

#### **Whither hast thou hidden thyself?**

3. It is as though she said: O Word, my Spouse, show me the place where Thou art hidden; wherein she begs Him to manifest His Divine Essence; for the place where the Son of God is hidden is, as Saint John<sup>7</sup> says, 'the bosom of the Father,' which is the Divine Essence, the which is removed from every mortal eye and hidden from all human understanding. For this cause Isaias, speaking with God, said: 'Verily Thou art a hidden God.'<sup>8</sup> Hence it is to be noted that, however lofty are the communications of a soul with God in this life, and the revelations of His presence, and however high and exalted is its knowledge of

G, Ej: 'leaving me wounded.'

<sup>2</sup> G: 'and thou wert already gone.' Ej, S: 'thou wert already gone.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, S: 'that is already wounded and enamoured.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'union.'

<sup>5</sup> [*herido y llagado*. Cf. pp. 53, n. 1 above and 216, below.] Jaén alone omits *y llagado*. Bg has: '... and wounded her by His hand.'

<sup>6</sup> Sg: 'is not yet killed, taken away and loosed.' Ej: 'is not yet taken away and loosed.'

<sup>7</sup> St. John i, 18.

<sup>8</sup> Isaias xlv, 15.

Him, they are not God in His Essence, nor have aught to do with Him. For in truth He is still hidden from the soul, and therefore it ever beseems the soul, amid all these grandeurs, to consider Him as hidden, and to seek Him as One hidden, saying: 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?' For neither is a sublime communication of Him nor a sensible revelation of His presence a sure testimony of His gracious presence, nor is aridity or the want of all these things in the soul a testimony of His absence<sup>1</sup> from it. For which cause says the prophet Job: 'If He comes to me I shall not see Him; and if He departs, I shall not understand Him.'<sup>2</sup>

4. Wherein is to be understood that, if the soul should experience any great communication or spiritual knowledge or feeling it must not for that reason persuade itself that that feeling is to possess or see God clearly and essentially, or that it is to possess God more completely or be more deeply in God, however profound it may be;<sup>3</sup> and that, if all these sensible and spiritual communications fail, and it remains in aridity, darkness and desolation, it must not think that for that reason God is failing it in one estate more than in another. For in reality the one estate can give no assurance to a soul that it is in His grace, neither can the other, that it is outside it. As the Wise Man says:<sup>4</sup> 'No man can know if he be worthy of love or of hatred before God.' So that the principal intent of the soul in this line is not merely to beg for sensible and affective devotion, wherein there is neither certainty nor clear evidence of the possession of the Spouse in this life, but principally to beg for the clear presence and vision of His Essence, wherewith it desires to be given assurance and satisfaction in the next.

5. This same thing was signified by the Bride in the Divine Songs when, desiring to be united with the Divinity of the Word her Spouse, she begged the Father for it, saying: 'Show me where Thou feedest, and where Thou liest in the midday.'<sup>5</sup> For to entreat Him to show her where He fed was to beg that she might be shown the Essence of the Divine Word, His Son, for the Father feeds not upon aught else than upon His only Son,<sup>6</sup> since He is the glory of the Father. And to beg Him to show her the place where He lay was to beg that selfsame thing, since

<sup>1</sup> Sg had *presence*, which was emended to *absence*. Bz: '... in the soul the less clear testimony of His presence.'

<sup>2</sup> Job ix, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Bg: '... that that feeling is to possess God truly, or to be in God, however profound such experiences may be, to fear [*temer* for *tener*, an evident slip] God more.'

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes ix, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Canticles i, 6.

<sup>6</sup> G, S: 'only begotten Son.' Ej: 'on aught else save on the Word His Son.'

the Son alone is the delight of the Father,<sup>1</sup> Who lies not, neither is present, in any place, save in His beloved Son, in Whom He lies wholly, communicating to Him all His Essence—‘in the midday,’ which is in Eternity, where He ever begets Him and has begotten Him. It is this pasture, then, of the Word-Spouse<sup>2</sup> where the Father feeds in infinite glory, and this flowery bed,<sup>3</sup> whereon with infinite delight of love He lies profoundly hidden from every mortal eye and from every creature, that the Bride-Soul entreats<sup>4</sup> when she says: ‘Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?’

6. And, to the end that this thirsty soul may come to find her Spouse, and be united with Him through union of love in this life, so far as she may, and allay her thirst<sup>5</sup> with this drop that can be tasted of Him in this life, it will be well, since the soul asks this of her Spouse, that we should take her hand on His behalf and answer her by showing her the surest place where He is hidden, so that she may surely find Him there with the perfection and sweetness that is possible in this life,<sup>6</sup> and thus may not begin to roam about vainly in the tracks of her companions. To the which end it is to be observed that the Word, the Son of God, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is hidden, in essence and in presence, in the inmost being of the soul. Wherefore, the soul that would find Him must go forth from all things according to the affection and will, and enter within itself in deepest recollection,<sup>7</sup> so that all things are to it as though they were not. Hence Saint Augustine, speaking with God in the Soliloquies,<sup>8</sup> said: ‘I found Thee not, O Lord, without, because I erred in seeking Thee without that wert within.’<sup>9</sup> God, then, is hidden within the soul, and there the good contemplative must seek Him with love, saying: ‘Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?’

7. Oh, then, thou soul, most beautiful of all the creatures, that so greatly desirest to know the place where thy Beloved is, in order to seek Him and be united with Him, now thou art told that thou thyself

<sup>1</sup> A, without apparent motive, omits several lines here.

<sup>2</sup> S: ‘This pasture, then, is the Word-Spouse.’

<sup>3</sup> S: ‘[which] is the flowery bed.’

<sup>4</sup> S: ‘... every creature, and this the Bride-Soul entreats.’

<sup>5</sup> Jaén reads ‘being,’ by a slight slip [*ser* for *sed*].

<sup>6</sup> Ej: ‘so that she may there see that which is sure with the perfect possession and pleasure that is possible in this life.’ G has ‘read’ [*lea*] for ‘see’ [*vea*].

<sup>7</sup> Bg: ‘be united within itself in recollection.’ A, B: ‘enter within itself in recollection.’

<sup>8</sup> *Soliloquies*, Chap. xxxi: ‘Misi nuntios meos omnes sensus exteriores, ut quærerem te; et non inveni, quia male quærebam. Video enim, lux mea Deus qui illuminasti me, quia male te per illos quærebam, quia tu es intus.’

<sup>9</sup> G, Ej, Sg end: ‘wert within me.’

art the lodging wherein He dwells, and the closet and hiding-place wherein He is hidden, and that it is a matter of great contentment and joy for thee to see that all thy good and thy hope are so near thee as to be within thee, or, to speak more exactly, so near that thou canst not be without them. Behold, says the Spouse, the kingdom of God is within you.<sup>1</sup> And His servant the apostle Saint Paul says: 'You are the temple of God.'<sup>2</sup>

8. A great contentment for the soul is it to understand that God is never absent from the soul,<sup>3</sup> even though it be in mortal sin,<sup>4</sup> and still less from the soul in grace. What more desirest thou, O soul, and what more seekest thou without thyself, since within thyself thou hast thy riches, thy delights, thy satisfaction, thy fullness and thy kingdom, which is thy Beloved, Whom thy soul desires and seeks? Rejoice thou and be glad in thy inward recollection with Him, since thou hast Him so near. There desire Him, there adore Him, and go thou not to seek Him outside thyself, for so shalt thou be wearied and distracted; and thou shalt neither find Him nor rejoice in Him more surely or more quickly or more intimately than within thyself. There is but one thing to be remembered—that, although He be within thee, He is hidden. But it is a great thing to know the place where He is hidden in order to seek Him there with certainty. And this is that which thou also entreatest here, O soul, when with affection of love thou sayest: 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

9. But yet thou sayest: 'If He Whom my soul loves is within me, how is it that I neither find Him nor feel Him?' The reason is that He is hidden and that thou hidest not thyself likewise that thou mayest find Him and feel Him; for he that has to find some hidden thing must enter very secretly<sup>5</sup> even into that same hidden place where it is, and, when he finds it, he too is hidden like that which he has found. Since, then, thy beloved Spouse is the treasure hidden in the field of thy soul, for the which treasure the wise merchant gave all that he had,<sup>6</sup> it will be fitting that, in order to find it, thou forget all that is thine, withdraw thyself from all creatures, hide in the interior closet of thy spirit,<sup>7</sup> and, shutting the door upon thee (that is to say, shutting thy will upon all things), pray to thy Father Who is in secret.<sup>8</sup> Thus, remaining

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xvii, 21.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians vi, 16.

<sup>3</sup> A, Sg, G, Ej: 'from it.'

<sup>4</sup> Sg has a marginal addition: 'giving to it and preserving in it its natural being.'

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'very hiddenly.']

<sup>6</sup> St. Matthew xiii, 44.

<sup>7</sup> St. Matthew vi, 6.

<sup>8</sup> [Lit., 'is hidden.' So, to the end of the sentence, the word (*escondido*) translated 'secret' for the sake of the English is that which above is rendered 'hidden,' because of its connection with *esconder*, 'to hide.']

secretly with Him, shalt thou then experience His presence in secret, and shalt love Him and have fruition of Him in secret, and shalt delight in Him in secret—that is to say,<sup>1</sup> beyond all that is attainable by tongue and sense.

10. Come, then, beauteous soul, since now thou knowest that the Beloved of thy desire dwells hidden within thy bosom, strive to be securely hidden with Him, and in thy bosom thou shalt embrace Him and experience His presence with affection of love. And see, He bids thee to that hiding-place, through *Isaias*, saying: 'Come, enter thou into thy chambers, shut thy doors about thee (that is, shut all thy faculties upon all creatures), hide thyself a little for a moment'<sup>2</sup>—that is, for this moment of temporal life. For if in this brief space of life, O soul, thou keepest thy heart with all diligence, as says the *Wise Man*,<sup>3</sup> without any doubt God will give thee that which later He describes, through *Isaias*, in these words: 'I will give thee the hidden treasures and I will reveal to thee the substance and mysteries of the secrets.'<sup>4</sup> This substance of the secrets is God Himself, for God is the substance of faith and the conception thereof, and faith is the secret and the mystery. And when this that faith keeps secret and concealed from us is revealed and made manifest, which is, as *Saint Paul* says,<sup>5</sup> the perfection of God,<sup>6</sup> then shall the substance and mysteries of the secrets be revealed to the soul; but, in this mortal life, although the soul will not attain to them as purely as in the next, however deeply it hide itself, yet if it hide itself, like *Moses*,<sup>7</sup> in the cavern of the rock, which is the true imitation of the perfection of the life of the Son of God, Spouse of the soul, protected by God<sup>8</sup> with His right hand, it will merit being shown the 'back parts' of God, which is to attain to such perfection in this life, as to be united and transformed through love in the said Son of God its Spouse. And this in such wise that it will feel itself so closely united with Him and so fully instructed and learned in His mysteries that, so far as the knowledge of Him in this life is concerned, it will no longer need to say: 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

<sup>1</sup> *Av* modifies: 'pray to thy Father Who is in secret, and thou shalt have delight in Him and shalt feel Him and love Him and have fruition of Him in secret, that is to say . . .'  
*A* reads similarly.

<sup>2</sup> *Isaias* xxvi, 20. [The word rendered 'chambers' is translated 'closet(s)' in the last paragraph.]

<sup>3</sup> *Proverbs* iv, 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Isaias* xlv, 3.

<sup>5</sup> *1 Corinthians* xiii, 10.

<sup>6</sup> *A* reads: 'for God is the substance of faith, which is the perfection of God,' omitting all that is between these two phrases in the text.

<sup>7</sup> *Exodus* xxxiii, 22.

<sup>8</sup> *Ej*, *G*: 'which is the true imitation of the Passion of Jesus Christ and perfection of His most holy life, protected by God . . ., etc.' *Sg* reads similarly.

11. Thou hast been told, O soul, what method thou art to follow in order to find the Spouse in thy hiding-place; but, if thou wilt hear it again, hear a word full of substance and unapproachable truth: it is that thou seek Him in faith and in love, without desiring to find satisfaction in aught, or to taste or understand more than that which it is well for thee to know; for these two<sup>1</sup> are the guides<sup>2</sup> of the blind, which will lead thee, by a way that thou knowest not, to the hidden place of God. Because faith, which is the secret that we have mentioned, is like the feet wherewith the soul journeys to God, and love is the guide that directs it; and if it continues to discourse and meditate upon<sup>3</sup> these mysteries and secrets of faith it will merit the revelation to it by love of that which faith holds within itself, which is the Spouse Whom it desires in this life through especial grace<sup>4</sup> of Divine union with God, as we have said, and in the next life through essential glory, having fruition of Him face to face, and in no way secretly. But meanwhile, although the soul attains to this said union<sup>5</sup> (which is the loftiest estate that it can reach in this life), inasmuch as He is still hidden from it in the bosom of the Father, as we have said, which is the way in which it desires to have fruition of Him in the life to come, the soul says ever: 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?'<sup>6</sup>

12. Right well doest thou, O soul, to seek Him ever in His hiding-place, for greatly dost thou magnify God, and closely dost thou approach Him, when thou holdest Him to be far more lofty and profound than all that thou canst reach; remain thou not, therefore, either partly or wholly, in that which thy faculties can comprehend. I mean, be thou never willingly satisfied with that which thou understandest of God,<sup>7</sup> but rather with that which thou understandest not of Him; and do thou never rest in loving and having delight in that which thou understandest or feelest concerning God, but do thou love and have delight in that which thou canst not understand and feel concerning Him; for this, as we have said, is to seek Him in faith. Since God is

<sup>1</sup> [i.e. faith and love.]

<sup>2</sup> [Lit., 'the blind man's youths,' *los moços del ciego*.] B has *los moços de cielo*, 'the youths of heaven,' and Bg, *los modos del cielo*, 'the manners of heaven,' substituting for the following phrase: 'whereby thou wilt not be able to find the hidden place of God.'

<sup>3</sup> [*manoseando*, lit., 'touching frequently.'] S has *manejando*, 'handling.'

<sup>4</sup> Jaén, A, Sg, omit the following 'of.' S has 'through spiritual grace.' The remaining versions read as in the text.

<sup>5</sup> Thus Jaén, Av, Bz. The rest read: 'this Divine union.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej omits or alters a great part of the passage 'Because faith . . . hidden Thyself.' G also has some variations, but very slight ones.

<sup>7</sup> Ej omits the words 'of God . . . understandest not.' G reads: '. . . of God, but love and have delight in that which thou canst not understand or feel concerning Him; for this is . . .', etc.

unapproachable and hidden, as we have likewise said, however much it seem to thee that thou findest and feelest and understandest Him, thou must ever hold Him as hidden, and serve Him, as One that is hidden, after a hidden manner. And be thou not like many ignorant persons who hold a low conception of God, understanding God to be farther off and more completely hidden when they understand Him not and have no consciousness or experience of Him; the truth being rather the contrary, that, the less clearly<sup>1</sup> they understand Him, the nearer they are approaching to Him,<sup>2</sup> for, as says the prophet David,<sup>3</sup> He made darkness His hiding-place. Thus, when thou drawest near to Him, thou must perforce be conscious of darkness because of the weakness of thy sight. Well doest thou, then, at all times, whether of adversity or of temporal or spiritual prosperity, to hold God to be hidden and thus to cry to Him, saying: 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

**And hast left me, O Beloved, to my sighing?**

13. The Bride calls Him 'Beloved,' in order the more to move and incline Him to her prayer, for, when God is loved, He responds to the petitions of His lover with great readiness.<sup>4</sup> And this He says through Saint John, in these words: 'If you abide in Me, you shall ask all that you will and it shall be done.'<sup>5</sup> Wherefore the soul can then in truth call Him Beloved when it is wholly with Him and has not its heart set on aught that is outside Him and thus has its thought habitually upon Him. For want of this Dalila asked Samson how he could say that he loved her when his spirit was not with her.<sup>6</sup> In this spirit are included the thought and the affection. Some, therefore, call the Spouse 'Beloved' when He is not in truth their Beloved because they have not their heart wholly with Him; and thus their petition is of less effect before God; wherefore they are not at once granted their petition until they persevere in prayer and, at the same time, come to have their spirit more continuously with God, and their heart more wholly with Him in affection of love, for naught is obtained of God save by love.

14. In the words which she then says: 'And hast left me to my sighing,' it is to be observed that the absence of the Beloved causes in the lover a continual sighing, because apart from Him she loves naught,

<sup>1</sup> S omits 'clearly.'

<sup>2</sup> This is the reading of G, Ej, Sg. Jaén, B, Bg, A. Av read thus: 'that, the more clearly they understand Him, the nearer they are approaching to Him'—a manifest error, since this is not the thought of the Saint.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xvii, 12. [A.V., xviii, 11.]

<sup>4</sup> [facilidad.] Ej, Sg, fidelidad, 'fidelity.' G: 'with grace of fidelity.'

<sup>5</sup> St. John xv, 7.

<sup>6</sup> Judges xvi, 15.

rests in naught and finds relief in naught; whence a man who indeed loves God will be known by this, namely, if he be content with naught that is less than God. But why do I say 'be content'? For although<sup>1</sup> he have all things at once he will not be content, but rather the more he has, the less satisfied will he be;<sup>2</sup> for satisfaction of the heart is not found in the possession of things, but in detachment from them all and in poverty of spirit. Since perfection of love wherein God is possessed with a very intimate<sup>3</sup> and individual grace consists in this, the soul in this life, when it has attained thereto, lives with a certain satisfaction, but not with fullness thereof, for David, with all his perfection, expected fullness only in Heaven, saying: 'When Thy glory shall appear I shall be satisfied.'<sup>4</sup> And thus the peace and tranquillity and satisfaction of heart to which the soul may attain in this life suffice not for it to have within it no more sighing (albeit peaceful and not painful sighing) in the hope of obtaining that which it lacks. For the sighing is connected with the hope.<sup>5</sup> Such sighing the Apostle declared that he and others had, though they were perfect, saying: 'We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of sons of God.'<sup>6</sup> This sighing, then, the soul in this stanza has within herself, in the heart enkindled with love; for where love wounds, there is the sighing of the wounded soul, crying ever in sorrow for the absence of her Beloved,<sup>7</sup> above all when, having enjoyed some kind of sweet and delectable communion with the Spouse, He absents Himself and she is left of a sudden dry and alone. Wherefore she says next:

**Thou didst flee like the hart,**

15. Here it is to be observed that in the Songs the Bride compares the Spouse to the hart and the mountain goat, saying: 'My Beloved is like to the goat, and to the young of the harts.'<sup>8</sup> And this not only because He is strange and solitary and flees from companions,<sup>9</sup> like the hart, but also because of the swiftness wherewith He hides and reveals Himself, as He is wont to do in the visits which He makes to devout souls, to refresh them and give them courage, and in the withdrawals

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'But why do I say "be content"? Rather he "occupies himself," for although . . .

<sup>2</sup> A: 'but rather, the more he has [of] these, the more satisfied will he be.'

<sup>3</sup> Av, B, Bg, Bz, G, Ej, Sg: 'united.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xvi, 15. [AV., xvii, 15.]

<sup>5</sup> A, B, Bg: 'with the hope of obtaining that which it lacks.'

<sup>6</sup> Romans viii, 23.

<sup>7</sup> [The text omits 'of her Beloved.']

<sup>8</sup> Canticles ii, 9.

<sup>9</sup> Ej, B, G have *compañías*, 'those who keep Him company'; Bg: *campañías*, 'countries.'

and absences which He makes them experience after such visits, in order to prove them<sup>1</sup> and humble them and teach them. In this way He makes them to grieve the more bitterly for His absence, as the soul now declares in that which follows, saying:

### Having wounded me:

16. And this is as though she had said: Not only were the sorrow and grief which I suffer ordinarily in Thy absence insufficient for me, but Thou didst wound me yet more, by love, with Thine arrow; and, increasing my passion and desire for the sight of Thee, Thou dost flee with the swiftness of the hart and allowest not Thyself to be in the very smallest degree comprehended.

17. For the further exposition of this line we must know that, beside many other different kinds of visit<sup>2</sup> which God makes to the soul, wounding it and upraising it in love,<sup>3</sup> He is wont to bestow on it certain hidden touches<sup>4</sup> of love, which like a fiery arrow strike and pierce the soul and leave it wholly cauterized<sup>5</sup> with the fire of love; and these are properly called the wounds of love, whereof the soul here speaks. So greatly do these wounds enkindle the will, and in affection, that the soul finds itself burning in the fire and flame of love, so much so that it appears to be consumed in that flame which causes it to go forth from itself and be wholly renewed and enter upon another mode of being; like the phoenix, that is burned up and re-born anew. Of this David speaks and says: 'My heart was kindled and my reins were changed and I brought myself to nothing and I knew not.'<sup>6</sup>

18. The desires and affections, which the Prophet here describes as reins, are all stirred, and in that enkindlement of the heart change into Divine affections, and the soul through love is reduced to naught, and knows naught save love. And at this season there takes place the stirring<sup>7</sup> of these reins, which is much like to a torture, and a yearning to see God—so much so that the rigour wherewith love treats the soul seems to it intolerable; not because it has been wounded thereby (for aforesaid it held such wounds to be health),<sup>8</sup> but because it is left thus grieving in love, and has not been wounded more severely, even

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G: 'to keep them.'

<sup>2</sup> Jaén: 'many other differences and visits.' Bg: 'many other differences or visits.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'wounding it with love.'

<sup>4</sup> A, Av, Bz, Bg, B, Sg: 'enkindling touches.'

<sup>5</sup> Sg: 'wholly as if taken captive.'

<sup>6</sup> Psalm lxxii, 21. [A.V., lxxiii, 21-2.]

<sup>7</sup> [conmutación.] G: *comunicación*, 'communication.'

<sup>8</sup> Av, Ej, G, Sg, S: 'to be its health.'

to the point of death, in the which case it would see and unite itself with Him<sup>1</sup> in a life of perfect love. Wherefore the soul magnifies or describes her pain, and says: 'Having wounded me.'

19. That is to say: Leaving me wounded thus, dying with wounds of love for Thee, Thou hast hidden Thyself with as great swiftness as that of the hart. This grief that is so great comes to pass thus because, when God inflicts that wound of love upon the soul, the affection of the will rises with sudden celerity to the possession of the Beloved, Whose touch it has felt. With equal celerity it feels His absence and its inability to possess Him here<sup>2</sup> as it desires, and thus it is conscious at one and the same time that it is sighing at this same absence, for these visits are not like others wherein God refreshes and satisfies the soul, for these visits He makes to wound rather than to heal, and to afflict rather than to satisfy, since they serve to quicken the knowledge and increase the desire, and, consequently, the pain and yearning to see God. These are called spiritual wounds of love, and are to the soul most delectable and desirable; for which cause it would fain be ever dying a thousand deaths from these lance-thrusts, for they cause it to issue forth from itself and enter into God. This the Bride expresses in the line following, saying:

**I went out after thee, calling, and thou wert gone.<sup>3</sup>**

20. There can be no medicine for the wounds of love save that which comes from him that dealt the wounds. For this cause this wounded soul went out, in the strength of the fire<sup>4</sup> caused by her wound, after her Beloved that had wounded her, calling to Him so that He should heal her. It must be known that this going out is here understood spiritually according to two ways of going after God: the one, a going forth from all things, which she does by abhorring and despising<sup>5</sup> them: the other, a going forth from herself, by forgetting herself, which she does for love of God; for, when this love touches the soul with the efficacy whereof we are here speaking, it raises her up in such wise that it makes her to go out not only from herself through forgetfulness of herself, but even from her judgment<sup>6</sup> and the ways and inclinations natural to her, and she calls for God. And thus it is as

<sup>1</sup> S: 'would be united and joined with Him.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'to possess Him here in this life.'

<sup>3</sup> Jaén has a slip here [*eres* for *eras*, reading] 'Thou art gone.'

<sup>4</sup> [In the context of the earlier version (p. 35, above) it was necessary to translate 'the violence of the burning'; the Spanish phrases are identical.]

<sup>5</sup> G: 'by knowing and despising.'

<sup>6</sup> See p. 36, n. 2, above.

though she said:<sup>1</sup> By this Thy touch and wound of love, my Spouse,<sup>2</sup> Thou hast drawn forth my soul, not only from all things, but likewise hast drawn it forth and made it to go out from itself (for truly it seems that He draws it from its very flesh) and hast raised it up to Thyself, so that it cries for Thee, loosed from all things that it may cling to Thee. 'And Thou wert gone.'

21. As though she had said: At the time when I desired to possess Thy presence I found Thee not, and I remained loosed from the one thing yet not clinging to the other, buffeted woefully by<sup>3</sup> the gales of love and finding support neither in myself nor in Thee. This going forth in order to go to seek the Beloved, as the soul here terms it, is called by the Bride in the Songs to 'rise,' where she says: 'I will rise and seek Him whom my soul loveth, going about the city, in the streets and the broad ways. I sought Him (she says) and I found Him not,<sup>4</sup> and they wounded me.'<sup>5</sup> The rising of the Bride-Soul is here understood, speaking spiritually, as of an ascent from the low to the high, which is the same as the going out from oneself, whereof the soul speaks here—that is, from one's own low way of life and love of self to the high love of God. But the Bride there says that she was wounded because she found Him not; and here the soul says likewise that she is wounded by love and has been left thus; wherefore, one that is enamoured<sup>6</sup> lives ever in affliction during the absence of the Beloved, for he is already surrendered to Him, and has expectation to be paid for the surrender which he has made, which payment is the surrender to him of the Beloved, and this is not yet granted him; and being already lost to all things, and to himself, for the Beloved, he has found no gain to compensate him for his loss, for he lacks the possession of Him Whom his soul loves.<sup>7</sup>

22. This affliction and sorrow for the absence of God is wont to be so great in those that are approaching the estate of perfection, at the time of these Divine wounds, that if the Lord provided not for them they would die. For, as they have kept the palate of the will healthy and the spirit clean and well prepared for God, and as in that experience whereof we have spoken He gives them to taste something of the sweetness of Divine love, for which they yearn above all things, there-

<sup>1</sup> Ej omits: 'which she does for love of God . . . calls for God.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg: 'by this that is Thine and [this] wound of love.'

<sup>3</sup> See p. 36, n. 4, above.

<sup>4</sup> Canticles iii, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Canticles v, 7.

<sup>6</sup> S: 'And this is because he that is enamoured . . .'

<sup>7</sup> B adds: 'Such are the signs of him that goes about afflicted for God—that he has given himself to God and that he loves Him.'

fore do they likewise suffer above all things. For there is shown to them in glimpses an immense good, and it is not granted to them; wherefore their affliction and torment are unspeakable.<sup>1</sup>

## STANZA II

**Shepherds, ye that go Yonder, through the sheepcotes, to the hill,  
If perchance ye see him that I most love, Tell ye him that I  
languish, suffer and die.**

### EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza the soul seeks to make use of intercessors and intermediaries with her Beloved, begging them to tell Him of her pain and affliction; for it is a characteristic of the lover, when she cannot commune with her Beloved in His presence, to do so by the best means that she may. And so at this point the soul would fain use her desires, affections and sighs as messengers, who are so well able to make known to her Beloved the secrets of her heart. And thus she exhorts them to go, saying:

#### **Shepherds, ye that go**

2. Calling her desires, affections and sighs shepherds, inasmuch as they feed the soul on spiritual good things. For shepherd<sup>2</sup> signifies 'one who feeds,' and by their means God communicates Himself to her and gives her Divine pasture, which without them He does but little. And she says: 'Ye that go.' Which is as much as to say, Ye that go forth from pure love; because not all the affections and desires go to Him, but those only that go forth from true love.

#### **Yonder, through the sheepcotes, to the hill,**

3. By the 'sheepcotes' she means the hierarchies and choirs of the angels, by whose ministry, from choir to choir, our sighs and prayers travel to God, Whom she here calls 'the hill,' because God is the greatest of all heights; and because in Him, as on the hill, are spied out<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G: 'therefore do they suffer very greatly; for in glimpses there is shown to them an immense good and it is hidden from them; wherefore exceeding great is their affliction and torment.'

<sup>2</sup> [The Spanish word is *pastor*, which is more appropriate here than 'shepherd.']

<sup>3</sup> [See p. 38, n. 1, above.]

and seen all things, and the higher and the lower sheepecotes. To Him go our prayers, which the angels offer Him, as we have said; according as the angel said to holy Tobias, in these words: 'When thou didst pray with tears and didst bury the dead, I offered thy prayer<sup>1</sup> unto God.'<sup>2</sup> We can likewise understand by these shepherds the angels themselves, for not only do they bear our messages to God, but they also bring God's messages to our souls, feeding our souls, like good shepherds, with sweet communications and inspirations from God, which He also creates by means of them. And they protect and defend us<sup>3</sup> from the wolves, who are the evil spirits. Yet, whether these shepherds be taken to mean the affections, or whether they be taken to mean the angels, the soul desires them all to help her and be intermediaries for her with her Beloved, and thus she says to them all:

**If perchance ye see . . .**

4. This is as much as to say: If my good fortune and happiness are such that ye reach His presence so that He sees you and hears you. Here it is to be observed that, although it is true that God knows and understands all things, and sees and observes even the very thoughts of the soul,<sup>4</sup> as Moses says,<sup>5</sup> yet He is said to see our necessities and prayers, or to hear them, when He relieves them or fulfils them; for not all necessities and petitions reach such a point that God hears them in order to fulfil them, until in His eyes they arrive at a proper season and time and the number of them is sufficient.<sup>6</sup> And then He is said to see them or to hear them, as may be seen in the Book of Exodus, where, after the four hundred years during which the children of Israel had been afflicted in the bondage of Egypt, God said to Moses: 'I have seen the affliction of My people and I am come down to deliver them,'<sup>7</sup> though He had ever seen it. Even so said Saint Gabriel to Zacharias<sup>8</sup> that he was not to fear, since God had already heard his prayer in giving him now the son for which he had been begging Him many years;<sup>9</sup> yet He had ever heard him. And thus it is to be understood by every soul that, albeit God hearkens not at once to its necessity and prayer,

<sup>1</sup> S: 'thy prayers.' Sg: 'thy heart.'

<sup>2</sup> Tobias xii, 12.

<sup>3</sup> G, Ej, Sg add: 'like good shepherds.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G: 'even the thoughts and motions,' omitting 'of the soul.' Sg: 'even the motions and thoughts of the soul.'

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy xxxi, 21.

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'they arrive at a sufficient time and season and number.'] Ej, G: 'at a sufficient and just time and season.' Sg: 'at a sufficient and just season and time and number.'

<sup>7</sup> Exodus iii, 7, 8.

<sup>8</sup> St. Luke i, 13.

<sup>9</sup> Ej, G: '... heard his prayer which he had been making for many days.' So Sg, except that this has 'years' for 'days.'

yet it follows not that He will not so hearken at a fitting time—He Who is,<sup>1</sup> as David says, a helper in due time and in tribulation,<sup>2</sup> if the soul faint not and cease not from prayer.<sup>3</sup> This, then, is signified here by the soul when she says, 'If perchance ye see . . .' That is: If by good fortune the time has arrived at which He sees fit to grant my petitions.

... him that I most love,

5. That is to say: more than all things. Which is true when naught that presents itself to the soul daunts her from doing and suffering aught wherein she may serve Him; and when the soul can truly say that which she says here, in the line following, it is a sign that she loves Him above all things. The line, then, is:

**Tell ye him that I languish, suffer and die.**

6. Herein the soul represents three kinds of need, to wit: languor, suffering and death; for the soul that truly loves God with a love<sup>4</sup> having any degree of perfection suffers ordinarily from His absence in three ways, according to the three faculties of the soul, which are understanding, will and memory. She says that she languishes in the understanding, because she sees not God, Who is the health of the understanding, even as God says, through David: 'I am thy health.'<sup>5</sup> She says that she suffers as to the will, because she possesses not God,<sup>6</sup> Who is the refreshment<sup>7</sup> and delight of the will, even as David says likewise, in these words: 'With the torrent<sup>8</sup> of Thy delight shalt Thou satisfy them.'<sup>9</sup> She says that she dies as to the memory, because, remembering that she lacks all the blessings of the understanding, which are the sight of God, and the delights of the will, which are the possession of Him, and that it is likewise very possible to be deprived of Him for ever among the perils and chances of this life, she suffers at this remembrance a grief after the manner of death, for she can see that she lacks the certain and perfect possession<sup>10</sup> of God, Who is the life of the soul, even as Moses says in these words: 'Of a surety He is thy life.'<sup>11</sup>

7. These three kinds of need Jeremias likewise represented to God in the Lamentations, saying: 'Remember my poverty, the wormwood

<sup>1</sup> S: 'For He is.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and cease not.']

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xxxiv, 3. [A.V., xxxv, 3.]

<sup>4</sup> Bz: 'refuge.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm xxxv, 9. [A.V., xxxvi, 8.]

<sup>6</sup> B, Bg: 'and direct possession.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm ix, 10. [A.V., ix, 9.]

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'with a hunger.'

<sup>6</sup> Sg omits: 'because she possesses not God.'

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'With the current.'

<sup>9</sup> Bg, B, Bz, Av, S have: 'satisfy us.'

<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy xxx, 20.

and the gall.<sup>1</sup> The poverty refers to the understanding, because to it belong the riches of the wisdom of the Son of God, in Whom, as Saint Paul says, are hid all the treasures of God.<sup>2</sup> The wormwood, which is a herb most bitter, refers to the will, for to this faculty belongs the sweetness of the possession of God: lacking which, the soul is left with bitterness. And that the bitterness belongs spiritually<sup>3</sup> to the will is made clear in the Apocalypse, when the angel speaks to Saint John, saying that he should eat that book and it should make his belly bitter,<sup>4</sup> by the belly being understood the will. The gall refers not only to the memory, but to all the faculties and powers of the soul, for the gall signifies the death of the soul, even as Moses writes in Deuteronomy, when he speaks of the damned, saying: 'Their wine will be the gall of dragons and the venom of asps, which is incurable';<sup>5</sup> which signifies there the lack of God, which is the death of the soul. These three needs and afflictions are founded upon the three theological virtues—faith, charity and hope—which relate to the three faculties aforementioned in the order here set down: understanding, will and memory.

8. And it is to be observed that in the line aforementioned the soul does no more than represent her need and affliction to the Beloved. For one that loves discreetly has no care to beg for that which he lacks and desires, but only shows forth his need, so that the Beloved may do that which seems good to Him. As when the Blessed Virgin spake to the beloved Son at the wedding of Cana of Galilee, not begging Him directly for wine, but saying to Him: 'They have no wine.'<sup>6</sup> And when the sisters of Lazarus sent to Him, not to say that He should heal their brother, but to tell Him to see how he whom He loved was sick.<sup>7</sup> And this for three reasons. First, because the Lord knows better than we that which befits us; second, because the Beloved has the greater compassion when He sees the necessity of him that loves Him, and his resignation; third, because the soul is on surer ground with respect to self-love and love of possession if she represents her need than if she begs Him for that whereof she believes herself to have need. It is precisely this that the soul does here, where she represents her three necessities. And it is as though she were to say: 'Tell my Beloved this:

<sup>1</sup> Lamentations iii, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Colossians ii, 3.

<sup>3</sup> A: 'belongs especially.'

<sup>4</sup> Apocalypse x, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy xxxii, 33. Jaén, A, B, Bg have *insaciable* ('insatiable') for *insanable* ('incurable').

<sup>6</sup> St. John ii, 3. Av has: 'not begging Him but representing to Him the need: Wine they have not.'

<sup>7</sup> St. John xi, 3. Av: 'And the sisters of Lazarus said not: "Come, Lord, to heal our brother," but only: "He whom Thou lovest is sick."''

Since I languish, and He alone is my health, may He give me my health; and since I suffer, and He alone is my joy,<sup>1</sup> may He give me my joy; and since I die, and He alone is my life, may He give me life.<sup>2</sup>

### STANZA III

**Seeking my loves, I will go o'er yonder mountains and banks;  
I will neither pluck the flowers nor fear the wild beasts; I will  
pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.**

#### EXPOSITION

**W**HEN the soul sees that, in order to find the Beloved, sighs and prayers suffice her not, nor yet the making use of good intercessors, as she did in the first and the second stanza, and forasmuch as the desire wherewith she seeks Him is genuine and her love is great, she is unwilling to leave unmade any effort that is within her power; for the soul that of a truth loves God is not slothful in doing its utmost to find the Son of God, its Beloved; and even after it has done everything it is still not satisfied and thinks it has done nothing. And thus in this third stanza, wherein the soul desires to seek Him in deed, she describes the method which she has to employ in order to find Him,<sup>3</sup> namely this: she must practise the virtues and perform the spiritual exercises of the active and the contemplative life; and to this end she must accept no comforts or delights; nor must all the powers and snares of the three enemies of the soul—which are world, devil and flesh—suffice to detain and hinder her. So she says:

#### **Seeking my loves,**

2. That is, my Beloved. The soul clearly declares here that, to find God in truth, it suffices not to pray with the heart and with the tongue alone, nor yet to make use of the help of others; but, together with this, it is needful also to do ourselves that which is in our power; for God is wont to esteem more highly one thing done by a person himself than many things<sup>4</sup> done for that person by others. Wherefore the soul, remembering here the saying of the Beloved which runs 'Seek and you shall find,'<sup>5</sup> determines to go forth herself, after the manner that we have

<sup>1</sup> A, B, Bg: 'glory.' Bz: 'and since He alone is my glory.'

<sup>2</sup> A, Av, Bz, Bg, B, G, Sg: 'may He give me my life.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'in order to do it.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'than many things together.'

<sup>5</sup> St. Luke xi, 9.

described above, to seek Him in very deed, and not to rest until she finds Him, as do many who desire not that God shall cost them more than words, and even those badly put together, and will scarcely do anything for Him if it costs them anything. And some, for His sake, would not even rise from a place which is to their pleasure and liking unless by their doing so the sweetness of God came to their mouths and hearts without their moving a step and mortifying themselves by losing any of their useless desires, consolations and pleasures. But, until they leave these in order to seek Him, they will not find Him, however much they cry to Him; for thus did the Bride seek Him in the Songs and found Him not until she went forth to seek Him. And this she says in these words:<sup>1</sup> 'In my bed by night I sought Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, and found Him not. I will rise, and will go about the city; in the streets and the broad ways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth.'<sup>2</sup> And after passing through certain trials she says here that she found Him.

3. He, therefore, who seeks God desiring to have pleasure and rest in Him seeks Him by night and so will not find Him. But he that seeks Him in the practice and performance of the virtues, having abandoned the bed of his pleasures and delights, such a one seeks Him by day and thus will find Him. For that which cannot be found by night is visible by day. This is well expressed<sup>3</sup> by the Spouse Himself in the Book of Wisdom, where He says: 'Wisdom is bright and never fadeth away, and is easily seen by them that love her and is found by them that seek her. She preventeth them that covet her, so that she first sheweth herself unto them. He that seeketh her early in the morning shall not labour, for he shall find her sitting at the door of his house.'<sup>4</sup> In this passage he means that, when the soul leaves the house of her own will, and the bed of her own pleasure, having gone forth thence, she shall find the said Divine Wisdom, which is the Son of God, her Spouse; wherefore the soul says here: Seeking my loves,

### **I will go o'er yonder mountains and banks;**

4. By the mountains, which are lofty, she here means the virtues: first, by reason of their loftiness; second, because of the difficulty and toil which are experienced in climbing them; and o'er these mountains

<sup>1</sup> A: 'for thus did the Bride seek Him and found Him not, as is said in the Songs in these words.'

<sup>2</sup> Canticles iii, 1-2. Ej quotes the Latin text and not the vernacular version.

<sup>3</sup> Bg omits 'well.' Ej, G: 'very well.'

<sup>4</sup> Wisdom vi, 13-15.

she says that she will go, by practising the contemplative life. By the banks, which are low, she means mortifications, penances and spiritual exercises; and o'er these she says also that she will go, by practising in them the active life, together with the contemplative life whereof she has spoken,<sup>1</sup> for in order to seek God surely, and to acquire the virtues, there is need of both. This, then, is as much as to say: Seeking my Beloved, I will ever put into practice the lofty virtues and abase myself in lowly mortifications and exercises of humility. This she says, because the way to seek God is ever to be doing good in God, and mortifying evil in oneself, after the manner which she describes in the following verses, saying:

**I will neither pluck the flowers . . .**

5. Inasmuch as in order to seek God it is needful to have a heart that is detached and strong, free from all evil things and from good things that are not simply God, the soul speaks in this present line and in those which follow of the liberty<sup>2</sup> and the courage which she must have in order to seek Him. And herein she says that she will not pluck the flowers that she may find on the way, whereby she means all the pleasures and satisfactions and delights which may be offered her in this life and which might obstruct her road if she should desire to pluck or accept them. These things are of three kinds: temporal, sensual and spiritual. And because they all occupy the heart, and, if the soul should pay heed to them or abide in them, are an impediment to its attainment of such detachment of spirit as is needful in order to follow the straight road to Christ, she says that in seeking Him she will not pluck all these things<sup>3</sup> aforementioned. And thus it is as if she had said: I will not set my heart upon the riches and good things which the world offers, nor will I accept the satisfactions and delights of my flesh, neither will pay heed to the pleasures and consolations<sup>4</sup> of my spirit, in such manner as to be kept from seeking my loves over the mountains of virtues and trials. This she says because she has accepted the counsel which the prophet David has given to those that go by this road, saying: *Divitiæ si affluent, nolite cor apponere.*<sup>5</sup> That is: If riches abound, apply not your heart to them. This, too, she understands of sensual pleasures, as also of the majority of temporal blessings and spiritual consolations. Here it is to be observed that not

<sup>1</sup> G: '... active life, as in the virtues above-mentioned [she practises] the contemplative life.' So Ej, but with 'contemplation' for 'the contemplative life.'

<sup>2</sup> B, Bg, Bz: 'of the virtue.'

<sup>4</sup> Av: 'to the joys, pleasures and consolations.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'these flowers.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxi, 11. [A.V., lxi, 10.]

only do temporal blessings and corporeal delights hinder and turn one aside from the road to God, but likewise spiritual delights and consolations, if we attach ourselves to them or seek after them, obstruct the road to the Cross of our Spouse Christ. Wherefore it behoves him that will go forward not to turn aside<sup>1</sup> and pluck these flowers. And not only so, but it behoves him also to have the courage and the fortitude to say:

. . . nor fear the wild beasts;  
I will pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.<sup>2</sup>

6. In these lines the Bride speaks of the three enemies of the soul, which are world, devil and flesh, and these are they that war upon her and make her way difficult. By the 'wild beasts' she understands the world; by the 'mighty,' the devil; and by the 'frontiers,' the flesh.

7. She calls the world<sup>3</sup> 'wild beasts' because to the imagination of the soul that sets out upon the road to God the world seems to be represented after the manner of wild beasts, which threaten her fiercely,<sup>4</sup> and this principally in three ways. First, the favour of the world will leave her, and she will lose friends, credit, reputation and even property. Secondly—a wild beast no less terrifying—she must be able to bear the renunciation for ever of worldly satisfaction and delight, and of all the world's comforts. Thirdly—and this is worse still—the tongues of men will rise up against her, and will mock her, and will proffer many sayings and gibes against her and will set her at naught. These things are wont to prejudice certain souls in such a way that it becomes supremely difficult for them, not only to persevere against these wild beasts, but even to be able<sup>5</sup> to set out upon the road at all.

8. But a few generous souls are wont to meet other wild beasts, which are more interior and spiritual—difficulties and temptations, tribulations and trials of many kinds through which they must needs pass. Such God sends to those whom He will raise to high perfection, by proving and examining them as gold in the fire, even as in one place David says: *Multæ tribulationes justorum*.<sup>6</sup> That is: Many are the afflictions of the just, but out of them all will the Lord deliver them. But the soul that loves indeed, that prizes her Beloved above all things

<sup>1</sup> S: 'not to stop.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit the following paragraph.

<sup>3</sup> S: 'The world she calls.'

<sup>4</sup> Sg omits this phrase; Ej, G also omit it and substitute 'and spiritually' for 'and this principally.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'but they even think they will be unable.'

<sup>6</sup> Psalm xxxiii, 20. [A.V., xxxiv, 19.]

and that trusts in His love and favour, finds it not hard to say:<sup>1</sup> 'Nor will I fear the wild beasts.'

**I will pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.**

9. Evil spirits, who are the second enemy, she calls 'the mighty,' because with a great display of strength they endeavour to seize the passes of this road; likewise because their temptations and wiles<sup>2</sup> are stronger and harder to overcome,<sup>3</sup> and more difficult to penetrate, than those of the world and the flesh, and furthermore because they reinforce themselves with these other two enemies, the world and the flesh, in order to make vigorous warfare upon the soul. Wherefore David, speaking of them, calls them mighty, saying: *Fortes quæsierunt animam meam*.<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: The mighty sought after my soul. Concerning their might, the prophet<sup>5</sup> Job says also: 'There is no power upon earth that can be compared with that of the devil, who was made to fear no one.'<sup>6</sup> That is, no human power can be compared with his; and thus, only the Divine power suffices to be able to conquer him and only the Divine light to penetrate his wiles. Wherefore the soul that is to overcome his might will be unable to do so without prayer, nor will it be able to penetrate his deceits without mortification and without humility; whence Saint Paul, in counselling the faithful, says these words: *Induite vos armaturam Dei, ut possitis stare adversus insidias diaboli, quoniam non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem*.<sup>7</sup> Which signifies: Put on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil, for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood. By blood he means the world; and by the armour of God, prayer and the Cross of Christ, wherein is the humility and mortification whereof we have spoken.<sup>8</sup>

10. The soul also says that she will cross the frontiers, whereby, as we have said, she indicates the repugnance which the flesh has of its nature to the spirit and the rebellions which it makes against it. As Saint Paul says: *Caro enim concupiscit adversus spiritum*.<sup>9</sup> That is: For

<sup>1</sup> Bg: 'fears not greatly to say.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'their wily temptations.' A: 'the temptations are stronger.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'and harder to overcome.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm liii, 5. [A.V., liv, 3.]

<sup>5</sup> Bg: 'the holy prophet.'

<sup>6</sup> Job xli, 24. [A.V., xli, 33.]

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians vi, 11. Ej, G neither copy the Latin text nor translate it. Bz omits the translation. B, Bg omit the Latin text after *Dei* but translate the whole Latin text as above, A has the translation and omits the text.

<sup>8</sup> Av adds: 'with the which Divine armour we shall be able to conquer the mighty, who are the princes of darkness.'

<sup>9</sup> Galatians v, 17. Ej, G: 'As St. Paul says: *Concupiscit adversus spiritum*, which is to set itself as it were upon the frontier.'

the flesh lusteth against the spirit.<sup>1</sup> It sets itself, as it were, upon the frontier and resists those that travel on the spiritual road. And these frontiers the soul must cross, by surmounting these difficulties and, by the force and resolution of the spirit, overthrowing all the desires of sense and the natural affections; for, so long as these remain in the soul, the spirit is impeded<sup>2</sup> by their weight so that it cannot pass on to true life and spiritual delight. This Saint Paul sets clearly before us, saying: *Si spiritu facta carnis mortificaveritis, vivetis.*<sup>3</sup> That is: If by the spirit you mortify the inclinations of the flesh and the desires, you shall live.<sup>4</sup> This, then, is the procedure which the soul says in this stanza that she must needs follow in order to seek her Beloved along this road. Briefly, she must have constancy<sup>5</sup> and resolution not to stoop to pluck the flowers, courage not to fear the wild beasts and strength to pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers, and she must determine only to go over the mountains and banks, which are the virtues, after the manner already expounded.

## STANZA IV

**O woods and thickets Planted by the hand of the Beloved!**  
**O meadow of verdure, enamelled with flowers, Say if he has**  
**passed by you.**

## EXPOSITION

**A**FTER the soul has described the way wherein she will prepare herself for setting out upon this road, in order not to turn aside after delights and pleasures, and fortitude<sup>6</sup> to conquer temptations and difficulties, wherein consists the practice of self-knowledge, which is the first thing that the soul must achieve in order to come to the knowledge of God, she now, in this stanza, sets out upon her road, through consideration and knowledge of the creatures, to the knowledge of her Beloved, their Creator. For, after the practice of self-

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'For the flesh kicks (*cocce*) against the spirit.' [*Coccear* is 'to kick against the goad.']

<sup>2</sup> Bg, Ej: 'is oppressed.'

<sup>3</sup> Romans viii, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Sg: 'the carnal desires and inclinations.' Ej, G add after the Latin text: '*Hoc est: the carnal desires, inclinations and temptations.*'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'which, in short, is constancy.'] Ej, G: 'wherein, in short, is constancy.' S: 'which, in short, is to have constancy.'

<sup>6</sup> S: 'and the fortitude which she must have.' [This addition is necessary to the sense, unless we read as in the first redaction, p. 45, above.]

knowledge, this consideration of the creatures is the first thing in order upon this spiritual road to the knowledge of God; by means of them the soul considers His greatness and excellence, according to that word of the Apostle where he says: *Invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi, per ea quæ facta sunt, intellecta, conspiciuntur.*<sup>1</sup> Which is as if she said: The invisible things of God are known by the soul through the invisible and created visible things.<sup>2</sup> The soul, then, in this stanza, speaks with the creatures, asking them for news of her Beloved. And it is to be observed that, as Saint Augustine says,<sup>3</sup> the question that the soul puts to the creatures is the meditation that she makes by their means upon their Creator. And thus in this stanza is contained a meditation on the elements and on the other lower creatures, and a meditation upon the heavens and upon the other creatures and material things that God has created therein, and likewise a meditation upon the celestial spirits. She says:

### O woods and thickets

2. She describes as 'woods' the elements, which are earth, water, air and fire; for, like the most pleasant woods, they are peopled thickly with creatures,<sup>4</sup> which here she calls 'thickets' by reason of their great number and the wide difference which there is between those in each element. In the earth, innumerable varieties of animals and plants; in the water, innumerable different species of fish; and in the air, a great diversity of birds; while the element of fire concurs with all in animating and preserving them; and thus each kind of animal lives in its element, and is set<sup>5</sup> and planted therein as in its own wood and region where it is born and nurtured. And in truth, God so commanded when He created them:<sup>6</sup> He commanded the earth to produce plants and animals; and the sea and the waters, fish; while He made the air the dwelling-place of birds. Wherefore, when the soul sees that thus He commanded and thus it was done, she says as in the line that follows:

### Planted by the hand of the Beloved!

3. In this line is the following consideration<sup>7</sup>—namely, that these varieties and wonders could be made and nurtured only by the hand

<sup>1</sup> Romans i, 20. Ej, G have only '*Invisibilia Dei*, the soul speaking then, etc.'

<sup>2</sup> Av: 'the created visible things.' Sg: the visible things, created and sensible.'

<sup>3</sup> *Confessions*, Bk. X, Chap. vi.

<sup>4</sup> S: 'because even as the most pleasant woods are planted and peopled with thick plants and groves, even so are the elements [peopled] thickly with creatures.'

<sup>5</sup> Av: 'lodged'; S: 'placed.'

<sup>6</sup> Genesis i.

<sup>7</sup> S: 'In which line this is the consideration.'

of the Beloved, God. Here it is to be observed that she says intentionally 'by the hand of the Beloved'; for albeit God performs many other things by the hands of others, as by angels and men, He never performed the act of creation, neither performs it, save by His own hand. And thus the soul is greatly moved to love her Beloved, God, by the consideration of the creatures, seeing that these are things that have been made by His own hand. And she says furthermore:

**O meadow of verdure,**

4. This consideration is upon Heaven, which she calls 'meadow of verdure,' because the things that are created therein have ever unfading greenness and neither perish nor wither with time; and in them, as among fresh verdure, the just take their pleasure and delight;<sup>1</sup> in the which consideration likewise is comprehended all the diversity of the beauteous stars and other celestial planets.

5. This name of verdure the Church gives likewise to heavenly things when, praying to God for the souls of the faithful departed, and speaking to them, she says: *Constituatur vos Dominus inter amœna virentia*. This signifies: May God set you among the delectable verdure.<sup>2</sup> And she says also that this meadow of verdure is likewise

**Enamelled with flowers,**

6. By these flowers she understands the angels and the holy souls, wherewith that place is adorned<sup>3</sup> and beautified like a graceful and costly enamel upon an excellent vase of gold.

**Say if he has passed by you.**

7. This question is the consideration spoken of above, and it is as if she said: Say what excellences He has created in you.

<sup>1</sup> S omits 'and delight.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'Which signifies: May Christ, Son of the living God, set you among the ever delectable verdure of His Paradise. The soul says also that this meadow of verdure is . . .', etc. Ej, G give the text as: *Constituatur vos Dominus in prata virentia*, and continues: 'Among the delectable verdure may God place you.'

<sup>3</sup> Jaén, A, B, Bz: 'is ordered.'

## STANZA V.

**Scattering a thousand graces, He passed through these groves  
in haste,  
And, looking upon them as he went, Left them, by his glance  
alone, clothed with beauty.<sup>1</sup>**

## EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza the creatures make answer to the soul, which answer, as Saint Augustine says also in that same place,<sup>2</sup> is the testimony which in themselves they bear to the soul concerning the greatness and excellence<sup>3</sup> of God, and for which the soul asks in its meditation. And thus that which is contained in this stanza is in substance that God created all things with great facility and brevity<sup>4</sup> and in them left some trace of Who He was; not only did He give them being out of nothing, but He even endowed them with innumerable graces and virtues, making them beauteous with marvellous orderliness and unfailing<sup>5</sup> interdependence,<sup>6</sup> and doing all this through His Wisdom<sup>7</sup> whereby He created them, which is the Word, His Only-begotten Son. She says, then, thus:

**Scattering a thousand graces,**

2. By these thousand graces which she says He scattered as He went is understood the innumerable multitude of the creatures. She sets down here the greatest number, which is a thousand, in order to denote their multitude. She calls them graces, by reason of the many graces wherewith He endowed the creatures; and, scattering them—that is to say, peopling the whole world—

**He passed through these groves in haste,**

3. To pass through the groves is to create the elements, which here she calls groves. Through these she says He passed, scattering a thousand graces, because He adorned them with all the creatures, which are full of grace. And, moreover, He scattered among them the thousand graces, giving them virtue that they might be able to contribute to the generation and conservation of them all. And she says

<sup>1</sup> B, Ej, G, Sg: 'with his beauty.'

<sup>2</sup> *Confessions*, Bk. X, Chap. vi.

<sup>3</sup> B, Bg: 'beauty.'

<sup>4</sup> Av omits 'with great facility and brevity.'

<sup>5</sup> A, Ej, G, Sg: 'indifferent' [i.e. 'unchanging'].

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'mutual correspondence.'

<sup>7</sup> S: 'with His wisdom.'

that He passed, because the creatures are, as it were, a trace of the passing of God, whereby are revealed His greatness, power, wisdom and other Divine virtues. And she says that this passing was in haste, because the creatures are the lesser works of God, Who made them as it were in passing. The greater works, wherein He revealed Himself most clearly and which He wrought most lovingly, were those of the Incarnation of the Word and the mysteries of the Christian faith, in comparison wherewith all the rest were wrought as it were in passing, and in haste.

**And, looking upon them as he went, Left them, by his glance<sup>1</sup> alone, clothed with beauty.**

4. According to Saint Paul, the Son of God is the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance.<sup>2</sup> It must be known, then, that God looked at all things in this image of His Son alone, which was to give them their natural being, to communicate to them many natural gifts and graces, and to make them finished and perfect, even as He says in Genesis, in these words: 'God saw all the things that He had made and they were very good.'<sup>3</sup> To behold them and find them very good was to make them very good in the Word, His Son. And not only did He communicate to them their being and their natural graces when He beheld them, as we have said, but also in this image of His Son alone He left them clothed with beauty, communicating to them supernatural being. This was when He became man, and thus exalted man in the beauty of God, and consequently<sup>4</sup> exalted all the creatures in him, since in uniting Himself with man He united Himself with the nature of them all. Wherefore said the same Son of God: *Si ego exaltatus à terra fuero, omnia traham ad me ipsum*.<sup>5</sup> That is: I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. And thus, in this lifting up of the Incarnation of His Son, and in the glory of His resurrection according to the flesh, not alone did the Father beautify the creatures<sup>6</sup> in part, but we can say that He left them all clothed with beauty and dignity.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 26, n. 3, above.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews i, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis i, 31. Ej, G: '... in these words: *Vidit Deus cuncta, etc.* And they were very good.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'exalted the Humanity of Christ, and consequently ...'

<sup>5</sup> St. John xii, 32. G copies the Latin text only. Ej omits the Latin, and has 'bring' for 'draw.'

<sup>6</sup> Bg: 'not alone does the Father cause the creatures to be reborn.'

<sup>7</sup> Sg: 'and divinity.'

ANNOTATION OF THE STANZA FOLLOWING<sup>1</sup>

**B**UT, over and above all this, speaking now according to the sense and the affection of contemplation, it is to be known that in the vivid contemplation and knowledge of the creatures the soul sees that there is in them such abundance of graces and virtues and beauty wherewith God endowed them, that, as it seems to her, they are all clothed with marvellous natural virtue and beauty, wondrously derived from and communicated by<sup>2</sup> that infinite supernatural beauty of the image<sup>3</sup> of God, Whose beholding of them clothes the world and all the heavens with beauty and joy; just as does also the opening of His hand, whereby, as David says,<sup>4</sup> He fills every animal with blessing. And therefore the soul, being wounded in love by this trace of the beauty of her Beloved which she has known through the creatures, yearns to behold that invisible<sup>5</sup> beauty which caused this visible beauty,<sup>6</sup> and speaks as in the stanza following.<sup>7</sup>

## STANZA VI

**Ah, who will be able to heal me! Surrender thou thyself now completely.<sup>8</sup>**

**From to-day do thou send me now no other<sup>9</sup> messenger, For they cannot tell me what I wish.**

## EXPOSITION

2. As the creatures have given the soul signs of her Beloved by revealing to her in themselves traces of His beauty and excellence, her love has increased, and in consequence the pain which she feels at His absence has grown (for the more the soul knows God, the more grows her desire and anguish to see Him); and when she sees that there is naught that can cure her pain save the presence and sight

<sup>1</sup> A, B, Bg, Bz omit this heading.

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'supernatural and communicated by.' S: 'with marvellous supernatural virtue and beauty, derived from and communicated by.'

<sup>3</sup> [*figura.*] Bg: 'beauty.' Ej, G, Sg: 'sight.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm cxliv, 16. [A.V., cxlv, 16.]

<sup>5</sup> A: 'insatiable.'

<sup>6</sup> Av: 'by that invisible beauty.' G: 'by this other visible [beauty].' S: 'to behold that beauty, which is the cause of this other visible beauty.' Ej omits 'which . . . beauty.'

<sup>7</sup> Av: 'wherefore she utters the present stanza.' Ej: 'and says thus.'

<sup>8</sup> B inserts an additional 'now.'

<sup>9</sup> Sg: 'no longer any other.'

of her Beloved, she mistrusts any other remedy, and in this stanza begs Him to surrender to her the possession of His presence, entreating Him from that day forth to entertain her with no other knowledge<sup>1</sup> and communications from Himself and traces of His excellence, since these increase her yearnings and pain, rather than satisfy her will and desire;<sup>2</sup> the which will is contented and satisfied with naught less than the sight and presence<sup>3</sup> of Him. Wherefore, she says, let Him be pleased to surrender Himself to her in truth, in complete and perfect love, and thus she says:

**Ah, who will be able to heal me!**

3. As though she had said: Among all the delights of the world<sup>4</sup> and the satisfactions of the senses, and the consolations and sweetness of the spirit, naught of a truth will be able to heal me, naught will be able to satisfy me. And since this is so:

**Surrender thou thyself now completely.<sup>5</sup>**

4. Here it is to be noted that any soul that truly loves cannot wish to gain satisfaction and contentment until it truly possess God. For not only do all other things fail to satisfy it, but rather, as we have said, they increase its hunger and desire to see Him as He is. And thus each sight<sup>6</sup> that the soul obtains of the Beloved, whether it be of knowledge, or feeling, or any other communication soever (which are like messengers that communicate to the soul some knowledge of Who He is, increasing and awakening the desire<sup>7</sup> the more, even as crumbs increase a great hunger) makes it grieve at being entertained with so little, and the soul says: 'Surrender thou thyself now completely.'

5. Since all that can be known of God in this life, much though it be, is not complete knowledge, for it is knowledge in part and very far off, while to know Him essentially is true knowledge, which the soul begs here, therefore she is not content with these other communications, and says next:

**From to-day do thou send me now<sup>8</sup> no other messenger,**

6. As though she were to say: Permit me not henceforward to know

<sup>1</sup> Bg: 'caresses.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'increase her yearnings and the pain of being without the presence which satisfies her will and desire.'

<sup>3</sup> S omits 'and presence.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej: 'of the Beloved.'

<sup>5</sup> [See p. 26, n. 5, above.]

<sup>6</sup> Av, B, Sg have 'visit [*visita*] . . . from' for 'sight [*vista*] . . . of.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G: 'the desire and yearning.'

<sup>8</sup> A omits 'now.'

Thee thus imperfectly through these messengers—to wit, by the knowledge and the feelings that I am given of Thee, so far distant and removed from that which my soul desires of Thee. For to one who grieves for Thy presence, well knowest Thou, my Spouse, that the messengers bring an increase of affliction: for the one reason, because with the knowledge of Thee that they give they re-open the wound; for the other, because they seem but to delay Thy coming. Wherefore from this day forth do Thou send me no more of such far distant knowledge, for if until now I could make shift with it, since I neither knew Thee nor loved Thee much, now the greatness of the love that I have<sup>1</sup> cannot be satisfied with this earnest of knowledge: wherefore do Thou surrender Thyself completely. It is as if she said more clearly: This thing, O Lord my Spouse, that Thou art giving of Thyself in part to my soul, do Thou now give completely and wholly. And this thing that Thou art showing as in glimpses, do Thou now show completely and clearly.<sup>2</sup> And this that Thou art communicating through intermediaries, which is like to communicating Thyself in mockery, do Thou now communicate completely and truly, giving Thyself through Thyself. For at times in Thy visits it seems that Thou art about to give the jewel of the possession of Thyself, and, when my soul regards herself well, she finds herself without it; for Thou hidest it from her, which is as it were to give it in mockery. Surrender Thyself, then, completely, giving Thyself wholly to the whole of my soul, that it wholly may have Thee wholly, and be Thou pleased to send me no other messenger.<sup>3</sup>

**For they cannot tell me what I wish.**

7. As though she were to say: I wish for Thee wholly, and they are unable and know not how to speak to me of Thee wholly; for naught on earth or in heaven can give the soul the knowledge which she desires to have of Thee, and thus they cannot tell me what I wish. In place of these messengers, therefore, be Thou messenger and messages both.

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, S, Sg add: 'to Thee.'

<sup>2</sup> Av lacks the sentences following ('And this . . . no other messenger').

<sup>3</sup> S adds: 'from to-day.'

## STANZA VII

And all those that serve<sup>1</sup> Relate to me a thousand graces of  
thee,  
And all wound me the more And something that they are  
stammering leaves me dying.

## EXPOSITION

**I**N the last stanza the soul has described herself as being sick or wounded with love for her Spouse, by reason of the knowledge of Him that the irrational creation has given her; and in this present stanza she describes herself as wounded with love by reason of a loftier knowledge of the Beloved that she receives through the rational creation—namely, angels and men, who are nobler than the former. And, furthermore, she says that not only is this so, but likewise that she is dying of love because of a wondrous immensity that is revealed to her through these creatures; yet she attains not to a complete revelation thereof, for she calls it here a ‘something,’ since she cannot describe it, save that it is such that it makes the soul to be dying of love.<sup>2</sup>

2. From this we may infer that in this business of loving there are three kinds of pain which come to the soul from the Beloved, corresponding to three kinds of knowledge that can be had of Him. The first is called a wound; this is the slightest of the three and passes the most briefly, as does a wound, because it is born of the knowledge that the soul receives from the creatures, which are the lowest works of God. And of this wound, which here we likewise call sickness, the Bride speaks in the Songs, saying: *Adjuro vos, filiæ Jerusalem, si inveneritis dilectum meum, ut nuntietis ei, quia amore langueo.*<sup>3</sup> Which signifies: I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell him that I languish with love—meaning by the daughters of Jerusalem the creatures.

3. The second is called a sore, which takes firmer hold upon the soul than a wound, and for that reason lasts longer, for it is like a wound which has become a sore, wherewith the soul feels in truth that it goes about sorely wounded by love. And this sore is made in the soul by

<sup>1</sup> [*yagan.*] *Ej* has *vacan* [cf. § 6, below]; *A.*, *bajan*, ‘go down’ [an evident error, *b* and *v* being identically pronounced and frequently confused in writing, in Spanish].

<sup>2</sup> *S.*, *Sg* omit ‘of love.’

<sup>3</sup> *Canticles* v, 8. *Ej*, *G* omit the translation which follows.

means of the knowledge of the works of the Incarnation of the Word and mysteries of the faith; which, being greater works of God and comprehending within themselves a greater love than those of the creatures, produce a greater effect of love upon the soul; so that, if the first is as a wound, this second is as a continuous sore. Of this the Spouse in the Songs, addressing the soul, says: 'Thou hast ravished My heart, My sister, thou hast ravished My heart with one of thine eyes, and with one hair of thy neck.'<sup>1</sup> Because the eye here signifies faith in the Incarnation of the Spouse, and the hair signifies the love of the same Incarnation.

4. The third kind of pain in love is like to dying, which is as though the soul had the sore festered, and the soul has become wholly festered.<sup>2</sup> The soul lives while yet dying, until love slays it and so makes it to live the life of love, transforming it into love. And this dying of love is effected in the soul by means of a touch of highest<sup>3</sup> knowledge of the Divinity, which thing is the 'something' whereof, as is said in this stanza, they are stammering. This touch is neither continuous nor long, for were it so the soul would loose itself from the body; but it passes quickly, and thus the soul remains dying of love, and dies the more seeing that it cannot wholly die of love. This is called impatient love, spoken of in Genesis, where the Scripture says that Rachel had such great desire to conceive that she said to her spouse Jacob: *Da mihi liberos, alioquin moriar*.<sup>4</sup> That is: Give me children or else I shall die. And the prophet Job said: *Quis mihi det, ut qui coepit ipse me conterat?*<sup>5</sup> Which is to say: Who will grant me that he that hath begun me, the same shall end me?

5. These twofold pains of love<sup>6</sup>—namely, the sore and the dying—says the soul in this stanza, are caused in her by these rational creatures. The sore, in that place which says that they are relating to her a thousand graces of the Beloved in the mysteries and Wisdom of God taught her by the faith. The dying, in that place which says that they are 'stammering,' which is the sense and knowledge of the Divinity revealed to the soul in things that she hears said of God. She says, then:

### And all those that serve<sup>7</sup>

6. She means here, as we have said, by 'those that serve,' the rational creatures—angels and men—for these alone among all the

<sup>1</sup> Canticles iv, 9. Av, Ej, G, Sg omit 'thou hast ravished My heart' the second time.

<sup>2</sup> B, Bg: 'become one whole fester.'

<sup>3</sup> A: 'of human.' S: 'of its.'

<sup>4</sup> Genesis xxx, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Job vi, 8-9.

<sup>6</sup> Av: 'These two manners of love.'

<sup>7</sup> [See p. 54, n. 2, above.]

creatures serve God with understanding of Him. For that is the meaning of this word (*vagan*) which in Latin is *vacant*. Thus it is as much as to say: all those that serve God. Some do this by contemplating<sup>1</sup> Him in Heaven and having fruition of Him, as do the angels; others, by loving and desiring Him upon earth, as do men. And because through these rational creatures the soul knows God more keenly (now by considering their excellence, which is greater than that of all things else created, now by that which they teach us of God: the ones inwardly by secret inspirations, like those of the angels, the others outwardly through the truths of Scripture), she says:

**Relate<sup>2</sup> to me a thousand graces of thee,**

7. That is: they reveal to me wondrous things of Thy grace and mercy in the works of Thy<sup>3</sup> Incarnation and truths of faith which they expound to me concerning Thee, and relate to me more and more; for the more they desire to say, the more graces will they be able to reveal concerning Thee.<sup>4</sup>

**And all wound me the more**

8. For the more the angels inspire me and the more men teach me concerning Thee, the more do they make me to be in love with Thee, and thus the more do all wound me with love.

**And something that they are stammering leaves me dying.**

9. As if she had said: But beyond the fact that these creatures wound me in the thousand graces which they reveal to me concerning Thee, there is a something which, I feel, still remains to be said; a thing which I know has yet to be said;<sup>5</sup> a clearly imprinted trace of God which is revealed to the soul, and which it has to follow; a most lofty understanding of God, which cannot be expressed, and for that reason is called a 'something'; and if the other thing that I understand<sup>6</sup> inflicts upon me the wound and the sore of love, this that I cannot wholly understand, yet feel most deeply, slays me. This happens at times to souls that are already adept, to whom God grants the favour

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'by confessing.'

<sup>2</sup> [Cf. p. 180, n. 7, above.]

<sup>3</sup> S has 'the' for 'Thy.'

<sup>4</sup> [*de sí*.] Jaén, A, B, Bg have *de sí* ['of themselves'].

<sup>5</sup> The MSS., except Jaén, read: 'which I know not has yet to be revealed.' S: 'which I know not has yet to be said.'

<sup>6</sup> Bg: 'that I have.'

of giving, through that which they hear or see or understand, and sometimes without any of those means, a sublime knowledge, wherein it is granted them to understand or to perceive the loftiness and greatness<sup>1</sup> of God; and in this perception the soul experiences such lofty feelings of God that it understands clearly that all has yet<sup>2</sup> to be understood; and that understanding and feeling that the Divinity is so vast that it cannot be perfectly understood is a most sublime understanding. And thus one of the great favours that God grants fleetingly in this life is to give it to understand so clearly and to feel so deeply concerning God, that it is able to understand clearly that it cannot understand or feel at all; for in some manner the soul is like those who see Him in Heaven, where those that know Him the best understand the most distinctly the infinitude that they still have to understand, while those that see Him least perceive less clearly than those that see most how much they have yet to see.

10. This, I think,<sup>3</sup> one who has not experienced it will not succeed in understanding; but the soul that experiences it, seeing that it has yet to understand that which it feels so profoundly, calls it a 'something'; for, as it is not understood, so neither can it be expressed—although, as I have said, it can be felt. Wherefore the Bride says that the creatures are stammering to her because they cannot perfectly explain themselves; for that is the meaning of 'stammer'—namely, to talk as do children, and not to convey and express perfectly that which they have to say.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**L**IKEWISE, with respect to the other creatures, there come to the soul certain enlightenments in the way that we have described (albeit they are not always so sublime) when God grants the soul the favour of unfolding to it the knowledge and perception of the spiritual power which is in them. They seem to be expressing grandeurs of God which they are unable to express perfectly, and it is as if they are going to express them, but fall short of making them understood,<sup>4</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Av, Ej, G, Sg omit 'and greatness.'

<sup>2</sup> Av: 'all has yet clearly.' Jaén: 'all gives itself.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'This, I understand.'

<sup>4</sup> Sg: '... of God, and are unable to express them perfectly, and they remain without being able to do so.' ['Remain' has here the force of little more than 'be.'] Ej: '... of God, and cannot express them perfectly, and they fall short of making them understood. It is as if they are going to express them, and remain without doing so.' A, B omit: 'and it is as if they are going to express them.'

thus it is a 'something that they are stammering.' And thus the soul proceeds with her complaint, and in the stanza following addresses her own life, saying:

## STANZA VIII

**But how, O life,<sup>1</sup> dost thou persevere, Since thou livest not  
where thou livest,  
And since the arrows make thee to die which thou receivest  
From the conceptions of the Beloved which thou formest  
within thee?**

## EXPOSITION

2. As the soul sees herself to be dying of love, even as she has just said, and sees also that she is not dying wholly, in such a way as to be able to have the fruition of love<sup>2</sup> freely, she makes complaint of the duration of her bodily life, by reason of which her spiritual life is delayed. And thus in this stanza she addresses the very life of her soul, laying stress upon the pain which it causes her. The sense of this stanza is as follows: Life of my soul, how canst thou persevere in this fleshly life, since it is death to thee and privation of that true spiritual life<sup>3</sup> of God, wherein in essence, love and desire thou livest more truly than in the body? And albeit this were no cause for leaving and freeing thyself of the body of this death in order to enjoy and live the life of thy God, how canst thou still persevere in the body so frail, since, besides this, the wounds which thou receivest from the love of the grandeurs that are communicated to thee from thy Beloved are alone sufficient to end thy life, all of which wounds leave thee vehemently wounded with love; so that the things that thou feelest and understandest concerning Him are so many touches and wounds which thou receivest, and which slay with love? The lines continue:

**But how, O life,<sup>4</sup> dost thou persevere, Since thou livest not  
where thou livest?**

3. For the understanding hereof<sup>5</sup> it is to be known that the soul lives where it loves rather than in the body which it animates, because

<sup>1</sup> B: 'O soul.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G: 'in order to have fruition of the Beloved.'

<sup>3</sup> A: 'since it is true death to thee of that true spiritual life.'

<sup>4</sup> B: 'O soul.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'For the understanding of these lines.'

it has not its life in the body, but rather gives it to the body, and lives through love in that which it loves. But over and above this life of love, whereby the soul that loves God lives in Him, the soul has its natural and radical life, as have likewise all created things, in God, according to that word of Saint Paul, who says: 'In Him we live and move and are.'<sup>1</sup> Which is to say: In God we have our life and our movement and our being. And Saint John says that all that was made was life in God.<sup>2</sup> And as the soul sees that she has her natural life in God, through the being that she has in Him, and likewise her spiritual life, through the love wherewith she loves Him, she complains and bewails that a life so frail in a mortal body can do as much as to impede her from enjoying a life so real, true and delectable as that which she lives in God through nature and love. The insistence that the soul lays upon this is great, for she here declares that she is suffering in two contrary ways—namely, in her natural life in the body and in her spiritual life in God, which in themselves are contrary, because the one wars against the other; and since she lives in both she has perforce to suffer great torment, for the one life, which is grievous, hinders the other, which is delectable, so much so that natural life is to her as death, since through it she is deprived of the spiritual life wherein she has all her being and life through nature, and all her operations and affections through love. And to explain more clearly the rigour of this frail life she next says:

**Since the arrows make thee to die which thou receivest**

4. As if she had said: And, apart from what I have said, how canst thou persevere in the body, since the touches of love (for this she means by 'arrows') which the Beloved inflicts upon thy heart suffice alone to deprive thee of thy life? These touches make the soul and the heart so fruitful in understanding and love of God that it may well be said that she has conception of God, according to what is said in the line which follows, namely:

**From the conceptions of the Beloved which thou formest within thee?**

5. That is to say, of the greatness, beauty, wisdom, grace and virtues that thou understandest of Him.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii, 28.

<sup>2</sup> St. John i, 4. See p. 57, n. 2, above.

## ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**A**s the hart, when it is wounded with a poisoned arrow,<sup>1</sup> has no ease and rest, but seeks remedies here and there,<sup>2</sup> now plunging into these waters, now into those; and as, each time, notwithstanding all the remedies that it applies, the poison<sup>3</sup> takes ever stronger hold upon it, till it seizes upon the heart and causes death; even so the soul that goes about pierced by the poisoned arrow<sup>4</sup> of love,<sup>5</sup> as does she of whom we are here treating, never ceases to seek remedies for her pain, and not only does she not find them, but rather all that she thinks, says and does becomes to her an occasion of <sup>6</sup> further pain. And she, knowing that this is so, and that she has no other remedy, save to come and place herself in the hands of Him that wounded her, that He may give her relief<sup>7</sup> and slay her outright through the power of love, turns to her Spouse, Who is the cause of all this,<sup>8</sup> and addresses to Him the following stanza.<sup>9</sup>

## STANZA IX

**Since thou hast wounded this heart,<sup>10</sup> Wherefore didst thou  
not heal it?  
And wherefore, having robbed me of it, hast thou left it thus  
And takest not the prey that thou hast spoiled?**

## EXPOSITION

2. In this stanza, then, the soul speaks yet once more with the Beloved, making complaint of her pain,<sup>11</sup> for love that is impatient, such as the soul here reveals, allows itself no rest nor gives any respite to its grief, setting forth its yearnings in every wise until it find a remedy. And as the soul sees herself wounded<sup>12</sup> and alone, having no healer, nor any other medicine, save her Beloved, Who it was that

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'wounded with poison.']

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'seeks remedies in this place and in that.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G: 'the wound.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the poison.'] Ej, G: 'the wound.'

<sup>5</sup> Av: 'of the love of God.' Bg: 'of the touch of love.'

<sup>6</sup> B, Bg, Ej, G, Sg: 'serves her for.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G: 'that He may wound her.'

<sup>8</sup> A: 'of all her pain.' Av omits 'Who is the cause of all this.'

<sup>9</sup> A: 'and says [as in] the following stanza.'

<sup>10</sup> Ej, G: 'this heart of mine.'

<sup>11</sup> Bg: 'of her love.'

<sup>12</sup> Sg: 'favoured.'

wounded her, she asks Him why, since He wounded her heart with the love that comes from knowledge of Him, He has not healed her with the vision of His presence. And why (she asks further), since He has robbed her of her heart, through the love wherewith He has enamoured her, drawing her forth from her own power, has He left her thus, namely, drawn forth from her power,<sup>1</sup> (for one that loves possesses his heart no longer, but has given it to the Beloved) and has not placed her truly in His power, taking her to Himself in complete and perfect transformation of love in glory.<sup>2</sup> She says, then:

**Since thou hast wounded this heart,<sup>3</sup> Wherefore didst thou not heal it?**

3. She makes not complaint because He has wounded her, for the more deeply the enamoured soul is wounded, the greater is her joy; but because, having wounded her heart, He did not heal it, by slaying it wholly; for so sweet and so delectable are the wounds of love that if they succeed not in slaying they cannot satisfy, but they are so delectable<sup>4</sup> that she would fain have them wound her even till they have wholly slain her,<sup>5</sup> wherefore she says this: 'Since Thou hast wounded this heart, wherefore didst Thou not heal it?' As though she had said: Wherefore, since Thou hast wounded it even to the point of leaving a sore in it, dost Thou not heal it by slaying it outright with love? Since Thou art the cause of its wound in affliction of love, be Thou the cause of its health in death of love;<sup>6</sup> for after this manner the heart that is wounded with the pain of Thy absence will be healed with the delight and glory of Thy sweet presence. And she adds:

**And wherefore, having robbed me of it, hast thou left it thus**

4. To rob is naught else than for a robber to dispossess an owner of that which is his and to take possession thereof himself. This plaint, then, the soul sets forth here to the Beloved, enquiring of Him why, since out of love He has robbed her heart and taken it out of her power and possession, He has abandoned it thus, without taking it truly into His own possession and keeping it for Himself, as the robber does to the spoils that he has robbed, by carrying them off with him.

<sup>1</sup> B, Ej, G, Sg omit the words 'has He left . . . her power.'

<sup>2</sup> Av: 'and perfect transformation of glory.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, Sg: 'this heart of mine.'

<sup>4</sup> Sg omits the words 'that if they . . . so delectable.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'till they had ended her life.' Bg reads [*llagar* for *llagar*, an almost certain error]: 'she would fain have them attain even to slaying her wholly.'

<sup>6</sup> Av omits: 'be Thou . . . love.' Bg reads: 'certain is the cause . . .'

5. Wherefore he that has fallen in love is said to have his heart robbed or raped<sup>1</sup> from him by the object of his love, because it wanders far away from him and is set upon the object of his love, and thus he has no heart of his own, for it belongs to the person whom he loves. Wherefore the soul may know well<sup>2</sup> if it loves God purely or no; for, if it loves Him, it will have no heart for itself, nor for regarding its pleasure and profit, but only for the honour and glory of God and for giving Him pleasure, for, the more of its heart it has for itself, the less it has for God.

6. And whether or no the heart has indeed been stolen by God can be determined by one of two things: by whether it has yearnings for God, and cares for naught else save for Him, as the soul here declares. The reason is because the heart cannot be in peace and rest without some kind of possession, and, when its affections are well set, it has possession neither of itself nor<sup>3</sup> of aught beside; and if,<sup>4</sup> furthermore, it possesses not completely that which it loves, its weariness<sup>5</sup> cannot fail to be as great as its loss until it possess it and be satisfied; for until then the soul is like to an empty vessel waiting to be filled, like to the hungry man that desires food, like to the sick man sighing for health, and like to one that is suspended in the air and has no place whereon to find a foothold. In that case is the heart of one that has truly fallen in love, and it is this that the soul by experience feels<sup>6</sup> here, saying: 'Wherefore hast Thou left it thus?' Which is to say, empty, hungry, lonely, wounded, in pains of love, suspended in the air.

**And takest not the prey that thou hast spoiled?**

7. Which is to say; Why takest Thou not the heart that Thou hast spoiled through love, in order to fill it and satisfy it and accompany it and heal it,<sup>7</sup> giving it perfect rest and a perfect abode in Thyself? However complete the agreement between it and the Beloved, the loving soul cannot fail to desire the recompense and wages of its love, for the sake of which recompense it serves the Beloved; and otherwise its love would not be true; for the wages and recompense of love are naught else, nor can the soul desire<sup>8</sup> aught else, than greater love, until it

<sup>1</sup> Av, Bz, Ej, Sg omit 'or raped.' [Cf. also p. 59, n. 4, above.]

<sup>2</sup> S: 'very well.'

<sup>3</sup> A reads: 'without some kind of possession, either of itself or', etc.

<sup>4</sup> Thus Ej, G, Sg. The other MSS. and editions read: 'And so.'

<sup>5</sup> A, S: 'wherefore its weariness.'

<sup>6</sup> Sg reads 'understands,' and Ej, G read 'understands well' for 'feels.'

<sup>7</sup> Sg: 'and satisfy it and protect it and love it.'

<sup>8</sup> B reads 'ask' for 'desire.'

attains to perfection of love; for love confers no payment save of itself, according as the prophet Job declared, when, speaking with the same yearning and desire which the soul here possesses, he says: 'Even as the servant<sup>1</sup> desireth the shade, and as the day-labourer looketh for the end of his work, so I had empty months and counted the nights wearisome for myself. If I sleep, I shall say: "When will come the day when I shall arise?"' And then I shall await the evening once again, and shall be filled with sorrows till the darkness of night.'<sup>2</sup> So, then, the soul that is enkindled in the love of God desires the fulfilment and perfection of love in order to find complete refreshment there; as the servant wearied with the summer desires the refreshment of the shade, and as the hireling awaits the end of his work, so does the soul await the end of hers. Here it is to be noted that the prophet Job said not that the hireling awaited the end of his labour, but the end of his work, in order to convey the idea that we are expressing—namely, that the soul that loves awaits not the end of its labour, but the end of its work. For its work is to love, and of this work, which is to love, the soul awaits the end and termination, which is the perfection and fulfilment of loving God. Until this is fulfilled for it, the soul is ever in the form described by Job in the passage aforementioned, holding the days and the months as empty and counting the nights as wearisome and tedious for itself. In that which has been said it is signified how the soul that loves God must not claim<sup>3</sup> or hope for any other guerdon for its services save the perfection of loving God.

#### ANNOTATION OF THE STANZA FOLLOWING<sup>4</sup>

**T**HE soul, then, being at this stage of love, is like a sick man greatly wearied, who, having lost taste and appetite, is nauseated by all food and troubled and annoyed by everything; but in all that presents itself to his thought or sight<sup>5</sup> he has before him one longing<sup>6</sup> and desire alone, which is for health; and all that conduces not thereto is wearisome and oppressive to him. Wherefore this soul, having reached this pain<sup>7</sup> of love for God, has these three characteristics, namely: that, in all things which present themselves to her and

<sup>1</sup> Bz and S follow the Scriptural authority correctly thus. The other MSS. and éditions read *ciervo* ('hart') for *siervo* ('servant').

<sup>2</sup> Job vii, 2-4.

<sup>3</sup> S reads 'wish,' and A 'ask,' for 'claim.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej includes the preceding sentence in this Annotation.

<sup>5</sup> A, S: 'thought and feeling or sight.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'appetite.']

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G: 'sickness and pain.'

with which she has to do, she has ever before her that concern<sup>1</sup> for her health, which is her Beloved; and thus, although she may occupy herself with these things, because she cannot do otherwise, she has her heart ever in Him. Hence comes the second characteristic, which is that she has lost her taste for all things. And hence likewise follows the third, that all these things are wearisome to her and every kind of thing that she does is oppressive and grievous.

2. The reason for all this, deduced from that which we have said, is that, since the palate of the will of the soul has tasted and savoured this food of the love of God, therefore, whatsoever thing or treatment is offered to it, the will is immediately inclined, without taking into account any other liking or consideration, to seek and to enjoy its Beloved therein. Even so was it with Mary Magdalene, when with ardent love she went about the garden in search of Him, and, thinking that He was the gardener, said to Him, without any reason or reflection: 'If thou hast taken Him hence, tell me, and I will take Him away.'<sup>2</sup> Since this soul has a similar yearning to find Him in all things, and finds Him not as soon as she desires—but rather quite the contrary—not only do these things not please her, but they are even a torment to her, and sometimes a very great one; for such souls suffer much in their commerce with men and in other business, since they are disturbed rather than helped thereby in their aspiration.

3. These three characteristics the Bride clearly declares that she possessed when she sought her Spouse in the Songs, saying: 'I sought him, and found him not. But they that go about the city found me and wounded me, and the keepers of the walls took away my cloak from me.'<sup>3</sup> For they that go about the city are the affairs of the world, who, when they find the soul that seeks God, deal her many wounds, which are sorrows, pains and displeasures;<sup>4</sup> for not only does she fail to find in them that which she seeks, but they even hinder her. And they that guard the wall of contemplation that the soul may not enter therein, which are the evil spirits and the affairs of the world, take away the cloak of the peace and tranquillity of loving contemplation. From all this the soul that is enkindled in love for God receives a thousand displeasures and annoyances; and seeing that, for as long as she is in this life without sight of God, she cannot free herself<sup>5</sup> from them either to a

<sup>1</sup> [Most expressively in the original: 'that "ah!" concerning her health.']

<sup>2</sup> St. John xx, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Canticles v, 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> Jaén: 'wounds, pains, sorrows and displeasures.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'she cannot find alleviation.'

great or to a small degree, she continues her entreaties with her Beloved, and says as in the stanza following:

### STANZA X

**Quench thou my griefs, Since none suffices to remove them,  
And let mine eyes behold thee, Since thou art their light and  
for thee alone I wish to have them.**

### EXPOSITION

4. The soul continues, then, in the present stanza, entreating the Beloved to be pleased now to set an end to her yearnings and afflictions, since there is none other that suffices to do this save only Himself; and she entreats Him to do it in such a way that her eyes may behold Him, since He alone is the light by which they see and she desires to use them for naught else save for Him only. She says:<sup>1</sup>

#### **Quench thou my griefs,**

5. The concupiscence of love,<sup>2</sup> then, has this one property, as has been said, that all that is not done and said in agreement with that which the will loves wearies, fatigues and grieves it, and makes it fretful, when it sees not the fulfilment of that which it desires; and this, and the weariness which she has to see God, the Bride here calls 'griefs,' to remove which naught else suffices but the possession of the Beloved. Wherefore she entreats Him to quench them with His presence, and to refresh them all, as cool water refreshes one that is wearied with the heat. For this reason she here uses this word 'quench,' to signify that she is suffering from the fire of love.

#### **Since none suffices to remove them,**

6. In order the better to move and persuade the Beloved to fulfil her petition, the soul says that, since none other than He suffices to satisfy her need, it must be He that shall quench her griefs. Whence it is to be noted that God is very ready to comfort the soul and satisfy her in her needs and afflictions, when she neither has nor seeks to have any other

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'to use them for naught else, and thus says:'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'of the soul.'

satisfaction and comfort than Himself; and thus the soul that can find pleasure in naught apart from God cannot remain for long without a visitation from the Beloved.

**And let mine eyes behold thee,**

7. That is, let me see Thee<sup>1</sup> face to face with the eyes of my soul.

**Since thou art their light**

8. Over and above the fact that God is supernatural light to the eyes of the soul, without which she is in darkness, she calls Him here, through her affection, 'light of her eyes,' in the way wherein the lover is wont to call the person whom he loves the 'light of his eyes,' to show the affection which he bears to her. And thus it is as if he had said in the two lines above mentioned: Since the eyes of my soul have no other light, either of their nature or of love, save Thee, let mine eyes behold Thee, for in every way Thou art their light. Of this light David felt the loss when with grief he said: 'The light of mine eyes, even that is not with me.'<sup>2</sup> And Tobias when he said: 'What joy can be mine, since I am sitting in the darkness and see not the light of Heaven?'<sup>3</sup> Wherein he desired the bright vision of God, because the light of Heaven is the Son of God, according as Saint John says, in these words: 'The heavenly city has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it; for the brightness of God lightens it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb.'<sup>4</sup>

**And for thee alone I wish to have them.**

9. Herein the soul seeks to constrain the Spouse to let her see this light of her eyes, not only because, having no other light, she will be in darkness, but also because she wishes to have them for naught else than for Himself.<sup>5</sup> For even as that soul is justly deprived of the Divine light who desires to set the eyes of her will on the light of possession<sup>6</sup> of any other thing beside God, inasmuch as the sight is occupied thereby and cannot receive the light of God, even so also, in the same way, a soul merits<sup>7</sup> that this be given her, if she closes her eyes aforementioned<sup>8</sup> to all things, to open them to her God only.

<sup>1</sup> A: 'That is, let mine eyes see Thee.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xxxvii, 11. [A.V., xxxviii, 10.]

<sup>3</sup> Tobias v, 12.

<sup>4</sup> Apocalypse xxi, 23.

<sup>5</sup> [*que para él*] A has *que parece* ['that appears'].

<sup>6</sup> G: 'light of prosperity.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G: 'even so also a soul merits abundantly.'

<sup>8</sup> G, Sg: 'she closes the door and her eyes.'

## ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**B**UT it must be known that the loving Spouse of souls cannot see them grieve for long alone, as He sees this soul of whom we are speaking, for, as He says through Zacharias, her griefs and complaints touch Him in the apple of His eye<sup>1</sup>; above all when the griefs of such souls are for love of Him, as are those of this soul. Wherefore He says also through Isaias as follows: 'Before they call, I will hear; even when the word is in their mouth I will hear them.'<sup>2</sup> The Wise Man says of Him that if the soul seeks Him as it seeks money it will find Him.<sup>3</sup> And thus it seems that this enamoured soul which seeks Him more covetously than it seeks money, since it has left all things—even itself—for Him, has been granted by God, after these exceeding fervent entreaties, a certain spiritual presence of Himself, wherein He shows it certain profound glimpses of His divinity and beauty, wherewith its desire to see Him and its fervour<sup>4</sup> are greatly increased. For even as men are wont to throw water on a forge to increase the heat and intensity of the fire, even so is the Lord wont to do with certain of these souls, which experience these calms of love,<sup>5</sup> by giving them certain signs of His excellence, in order to make their love more intense,<sup>6</sup> and thus to prepare them ever more for the favours which He desires afterwards to grant them. And even as, in that dark presence, the soul has seen and experienced that supreme good and beauty that is hidden therein, dying with desire<sup>7</sup> to see it, the stanza which follows says:<sup>8</sup>

## STANZA XI

**Reveal thy presence And let the vision of thee and thy beauty  
slay me;  
Behold, the affliction of love is not cured Save by thy presence  
and thy form.**

## EXPOSITION

2. The soul, then, desires to see herself possessed by this great God, by Whose love the heart feels itself to be stolen away and wounded;

<sup>1</sup> Zacharias ii, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs ii, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ej: 'these yearnings of love.'

<sup>7</sup> Sg: 'burning with desire.'

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G abbreviate: 'that supreme good and hidden beauty, she says thus:'

<sup>2</sup> Isaias lxy, 24.

<sup>4</sup> Sg: 'its favour and desire to see Him.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'to make their affection greater.'

and, being unable to suffer it any longer, she begs Him expressly in this stanza to reveal and show His beauty, which is His Divine Essence, and to slay her with the vision thereof, and thus to loose her from the flesh (since she cannot see Him in the flesh and have fruition of Him as she desires). She sets before Him the grief and yearning of her heart, which she feels continually as she suffers for love of Him and is unable to find any remedy less than this glorious vision of His Divine Essence. The line follows:

### Reveal thy presence

3. For the exposition hereof it must be known that there are three ways wherein God may be present in the soul. The first is in essence, and in this way He is present, not only in the best and holiest souls, but also in evil and sinful souls and in all other creatures; for by this presence He gives them life and being, and if they were to lack this essential presence they would all be annihilated and would cease to be: this presence is never lacking in the soul. The second presence is by grace, wherein God dwells in the soul, pleased and satisfied with it. And not all have this presence, for those that fall into mortal sin<sup>1</sup> lose it; and the soul cannot know naturally if it has it.<sup>2</sup> The third presence is by spiritual affection, since in many devout souls God is wont to create many kinds of spiritual presence wherewith He recreates, delights and gladdens them; but these methods of spiritual presence, like the rest, are all hidden, because God shows not Himself in them as He is, since the nature<sup>3</sup> of this life suffers it not; and thus of any of these may be understood the above-mentioned verse, namely: 'Reveal Thy presence.'

4. Inasmuch as it is certain that God is ever present in the soul, at least in the first way, the soul entreats Him, not to present Himself to her, but to reveal and manifest to her this hidden presence, which He grants to her, whether naturally or spiritually or affectively, in such a way that she may see Him in His Divine Being and beauty. She begs Him that, as with His present Being He gives natural being to the soul, and with His present grace He perfects it, so with His glory made

<sup>1</sup> Jaén, A, Av: 'fall into sin.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg modifies thus: 'and if this [presence] were lacking they would all be annihilated, and thus this essential presence which has been spoken of is never lacking in the soul. The second presence is spiritual by grace, wherein God dwells, pleased and satisfied with it. And not all souls have this presence, for those that are born in mortal sin lose it, and souls cannot know naturally if they have it.' Substantially identical with Sg are Ej and G.

<sup>3</sup> A: 'stanza' [*canción for condición*: an error]; B, Bg: 'capacity.'

manifest He will glorify it. But, forasmuch as this soul is full of fervours and affections of love for God, we have to understand that this presence which here she begs the Beloved to reveal to her principally denotes a certain affective presence which the Beloved has communicated, of Himself, to the soul. This was so lofty that it seemed to the soul that there was an immense hidden being there, of which she was conscious, and out of which God communicates to her certain half-obscure glimpses of His Divine beauty; and these produce such effect upon the soul that they cause her to conceive a great aspiration and to faint in desire for that which she feels to be hidden there<sup>1</sup> in that presence, which is like to that which David felt when he said: 'My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.'<sup>2</sup> For at this time the spirit faints with the desire to immerse itself in that supreme good which it feels to be present and hidden; although it be hidden, the soul is very deeply conscious of the good and the delight that are therein. And therefore the soul is attracted to this good, and carried away by it, with greater violence than that wherewith a natural object is attracted to its centre. And the soul, having that great longing and heartfelt desire, can no longer contain herself,<sup>3</sup> and says: 'Reveal Thy presence.'

5. The same thing happened to Moses on Mount Sinai. Being there in the presence of God, he was enabled to obtain such lofty and profound glimpses of the loftiness and beauty of the hidden divinity of God<sup>4</sup> that, being unable to bear it, he twice entreated God to reveal His glory to him, saying to God: 'Thou sayest that Thou knowest me by my own name and that I have found grace in Thy sight. Now, therefore, if I have found grace in Thy presence, show me Thy face,<sup>5</sup> that I may know Thee and may find in Thine eyes the perfect grace that I desire'<sup>6</sup> (which is, to attain to the perfect love of the glory of God). But the Lord answered him, saying: 'Thou wilt not be able to see My face, for man shall not see Me and live.'<sup>7</sup> Which is as if He were to say: It is a difficult thing that thou askest of Me, Moses, for such is the beauty of My face and the joy of the vision of My Being that thy soul will be unable to bear it in this manner of life that is so weak. And thus the soul, knowing this truth (whether because of the words wherein God here answered Moses, or whether also because, as we have said,

<sup>1</sup> G omits the passage: 'of which she was conscious . . . hidden there.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxxxiii, 1. [A.V., lxxxiv, 2.]

<sup>3</sup> Av: 'can no longer stop.' A, B: 'can no longer be content.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej: 'profound glimpses of the loftiness and dignity of God.' So Sg, but with 'divinity' for 'dignity.'

<sup>5</sup> Av: 'show me Thy glory.'

<sup>6</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 12-13.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 20.

she feels that there is something hidden in the presence of God), that she will not be able to see Him in His beauty in this manner of life, since she faints at the mere glimpse thereof, as we have said, anticipates the answer that may be given to her, as it was given to Moses, and says:

**And let the vision of thee and thy beauty slay me;**

6. Which is as if she were to say: Since the joy of the vision of Thy Being and beauty is so great that my soul cannot bear it, but that I must die upon seeing it,<sup>1</sup> let the vision of Thee and Thy beauty slay me.

7. It is known that there are two visions which are fatal to man because he cannot bear the strength and the efficacy of them. The one is that of the basilisk, at whose sight, it is said, men die immediately; the other is the vision of God. But the causes are very different; for the vision of the one slays with grievous poison and the other by boundless health and blessing of glory. Wherefore the soul acts not strangely here in desiring to die at the vision of the beauty of God, in order to enjoy it for ever; for if the soul had a single glimpse of the loftiness and beauty of God it would not only desire one death, as it does here, in order to see it for ever, but it would very gladly suffer a thousand most bitter deaths in order to see it for one single moment, and, after seeing it, it would beg that it might suffer as many more deaths in order to see it for a moment more.<sup>2</sup>

8. For the further exposition of this line, it must be known that here the soul speaks conditionally, when she prays that the vision and the beauty of God may slay her, assuming that she cannot see it without dying; for, if it might be so otherwise, she would not beg that it might slay her. For to desire to die is an imperfection of nature; but it is because she assumes that this corruptible life of man cannot co-exist with the other and incorruptible<sup>3</sup> life of God that she says: 'Let the vision of Thee and Thy beauty slay me.'

9. This doctrine Saint Paul declares to the Corinthians, saying: 'We would not be unclothed, but we would be clothed upon, that that which is mortal may be swallowed up by life.'<sup>4</sup> Which is to say: We desire not to be 'unclothed' of the flesh, but to be 'clothed upon' with glory. But, seeing that it is impossible to live in glory and in mortal flesh together, as we say, he says to the Philippians that he desires to be

<sup>1</sup> Av: 'is so great that my soul will be unable to see it without dying upon seeing it.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, Sg: 'to see it again for another moment'; G: 'to see it again for a moment more.'

<sup>3</sup> A. B. Bz: 'inaccessible.'

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians v, 4.

loosed and to see himself with Christ.<sup>1</sup> But here there arises one question, and it is this: Why did the children of Israel in olden times flee from God and fear to see Him lest they should die, as Manue said to his wife,<sup>2</sup> and yet this soul desires to die at the sight of God? To this the answer is that the causes are two. The one, because, at that time, even though they died in the grace of God, they would not see Him until Christ came, and it was far better for them to live in the flesh, increasing their merits and enjoying their natural life, than to be in limbo, incapable of earning merit, and suffering from darkness and the spiritual absence of God; for the which cause they held it then to be a great favour and benefit of God to live many years.

10. The second cause arises from love; for, since in those days men were not so completely confirmed in love, neither had they attained so nearly to God by love, they feared to die at the vision of Him; but now that, under the law of grace, when the body dies the soul may see God, it is healthier<sup>3</sup> to desire to live but little and to die at the vision of Him. And, even were this not so, the soul that loves God as this soul loves Him would not fear to die at the vision of Him, for true love receives all that comes to it from the Beloved, be it adversity or prosperity, and even chastisements, as that which He wills to work in it, with complete indifference, and in one and the same manner, and they become to it joy and delight. For, as Saint John says, perfect love casteth out all fear.<sup>4</sup> To the soul that loves, death cannot be bitter, for it finds therein all the sweetnesses and joys of love; the thought thereof cannot cause it sadness, since it finds joy therein; nor can it be heavy and grievous, since it is the termination of all its griefs and afflictions and the beginning of all its good. Death it holds as its friend and bride, and with the thought thereof it joys as upon the day of its betrothal and marriage; and it desires that day and that hour, wherein its death is to come,<sup>5</sup> more than the kings of the earth desired kingdoms and principalities.<sup>6</sup> For of this kind of death the Wise Man says: 'O death! Good is thy sentence for the man that feels himself needy.'<sup>7</sup> If this is good for the man who feels in need of things here below, when it supplies not his needs, but rather strips him of that which he had, how much better will its sentence be for the soul that (like this soul) is in need of love, and is calling for more love, since not only will it not strip it of that

<sup>1</sup> Philippians i, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Judges xiii, 22. Bg adds: 'Manue is the name of the father of Samson.'

<sup>3</sup> A: 'may see God by love, I say that it is healthier ...'

<sup>4</sup> 1 St. John iv, 18.

<sup>5</sup> A: 'wherein it has to live its death.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'kingdoms and primacies.'

<sup>7</sup> Ecclesiasticus xli, 2.

which it had, but it will also be to it a cause of the fulfilment of the love which it desired, and satisfaction for all its needs? The soul, then, acts rightly in venturing to say without fear: 'Let the vision of Thee and Thy beauty slay me'; since she knows that, at that same moment when the vision comes to her, she will be rapt away by the same beauty and absorbed in the same beauty, and transformed in the same beauty, and will become beautiful like the same beauty, and will be provisioned and enriched by the same beauty.<sup>1</sup> For this reason David says that the death of the saints is precious in the sight of the Lord.<sup>2</sup> Which would not be if they had not a part in His own grandeurs; for before God there is naught precious save that which He is in Himself; wherefore the soul, when it loves, fears not to die, but rather desires to do so. But the sinner ever fears to die, for he suspects that death will take from him all good things and will give him all evil things; for, as David says, the death of sinners is very evil.<sup>3</sup> Wherefore, as the Wise Man says, the remembrance thereof is bitter to them,<sup>4</sup> for, because they have a great love for the life of this world, and they love that of the next but little, they fear death greatly. But the soul that loves God lives in the next life rather than in this, for the soul lives where it loves rather than where it breathes, and thus it holds this temporal life as of small account. Wherefore the Bride says: 'Let the vision of Thee and Thy beauty slay me.'

**Behold, the affliction of love is not cured Save by thy presence and thy form.**

II. The reason that love's sickness has no other cure save the presence and the form of the Beloved, as is here said, is that, even as the pain of love differs from other sicknesses, so its medicine differs likewise. For in other sicknesses, according to sound philosophy, contraries are cured by contraries; but love is not cured save by things that are in harmony with love. The reason is that the health of the soul is the love of God, and thus, when it has not perfect love, it has not perfect health, and is therefore sick, for sickness is naught else than lack of health; so that, when the soul has no degree of love, it is dead; but, when it has any degree of love for God,<sup>5</sup> howsoever small this may be, it is at least alive, though very weak and infirm by reason

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G abbreviate this passage thus: 'she will be rapt away and absorbed in the same beauty, and transformed therein, and will be like the same beauty.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxv, 15. [A.V., cxvi, 15.]

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xxxiii, 22. [A.V., xxxiv, 21.]

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiasticus xli, 1.

<sup>5</sup> S omits the words 'degree of love for God.'

of the little love<sup>1</sup> that it has; and the more its love continues to increase, the more health it will have; so that, when it has perfect love, its health will be complete.

12. Here it must be known that love never attains to a state of perfection until the lovers are on so complete a level of equality that they are transformed the one in the other, and then love has perfect health. And because the soul here feels herself to have, as it were, the shadow of love,<sup>2</sup> which is the affliction whereof she here speaks, desiring that it may be perfectly formed, by means of the Form to Whom the shadow belongs, which is her Spouse, the Word, the Son of God, Who, as Saint Paul says, is the brightness of His glory and the form of His substance,<sup>3</sup> because this form is that which the soul here understands, and wherein she desires to be transformed through love, she says: 'Behold, the affliction of love is not cured, save by Thy presence and Thy form.'

13. Rightly is love that is not perfect called affliction, since, even as the sick man is too enfeebled to work, even so the soul that is weak in love is also too weak to work the heroic virtues.<sup>4</sup>

14. Likewise it may here be understood that in one that feels in himself affliction of love—that is, lack of love—it is a sign that he has some love, for it is by comparison with that which he has that he is able to realize that which he lacks; but the fact that one feels not this is a sign either that he has none or that he has perfection thereof.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

AT this season, the soul feels within itself such a vehement desire to journey to God that it is like a stone that is approaching ever nearer to its centre. Or, again, it feels like the wax that has begun to receive the impression of the seal and has not perfectly received its form. Again, it knows itself to be like the image of a first sketch and outline,<sup>5</sup> and cries out to Him that outlined it that He will complete its painting and formation. For its faith is so enlightened here that it causes it to trace<sup>6</sup> very clearly a certain Divine likeness<sup>7</sup> of the majesty

<sup>1</sup> S: 'the little love for God.'

<sup>2</sup> [Lit., 'feels herself with a certain outline (*dibujo*) of love.' The related verb *dibujar* is translated 'outlined' in the final line of the following stanza.]

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews i, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'is not also weak in loving the heroic virtues.' [This should probably read: 'is also too weak,' etc. The change involves only the substitution of *lo* for *no*.]

<sup>5</sup> [*dibujo*. Cf. n. 2, above.]

<sup>6</sup> Av, G: 'to seek.' Bg: 'to make out.'

<sup>7</sup> [*semblances*. See p. 63, n. 2, above.]

of its God. It knows not what to do save to turn to faith itself, as to that which encloses and conceals within itself the form and beauty of its Beloved, from which it likewise receives the said shadows<sup>1</sup> and pledges of love. The soul, then, speaks to faith, and says as in the next stanza.

## STANZA XII

**O crystalline fount, If on that thy silvered surface<sup>2</sup>  
Thou wouldst of a sudden form the eyes desired Which I bear  
outlined in my inmost parts!<sup>3</sup>**

## EXPOSITION

2. As with so great a desire the soul desires union with the Spouse, and sees that in all the creatures there is no means to that end, neither any relief, she speaks again to faith as to the one who shall give her the most vivid light from her Beloved,<sup>4</sup> considering faith as a means to that end; for indeed there is no other way whereby a soul may come to the true union<sup>5</sup> and spiritual betrothal with God, according as He declares through Osee, saying: 'I will betroth thee to Me in faith.'<sup>6</sup> And with the desire<sup>7</sup> wherein she burns she says as follows, which is the sense of the stanza: O faith of Christ my Spouse! If thou wouldst but show forth clearly the truths concerning my Beloved which, obscurely and darkly concealed, thou hast infused into my soul<sup>8</sup> (for faith, as the theologians say, is an obscure habit), so that that which thou communicatest to me in obscure and unformed knowledge thou mightest discover and reveal in a moment, withdrawing thyself from those truths (since faith is the covering and veil<sup>9</sup> of the truths of God), suddenly, formally and completely, and turning them into a manifestation of glory! The line, then, says:

**O crystalline fount,**

3. She calls faith 'crystalline' for two reasons: the first, because it is from Christ<sup>10</sup> her Spouse, and the second, because it has the properties

<sup>1</sup> *dibujos*.<sup>2</sup> *semblantes*.<sup>3</sup> See p. 63, n. 3, above.<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'shall speak to her most vividly of her Beloved.'<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'to perfect union.'<sup>6</sup> Osee ii, 20.<sup>7</sup> A: 'with the so great desire'; B, Bg: 'with the great desire.'<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'wherewith . . . thou hast informed my soul.'<sup>9</sup> A: 'the curtain and veil.'<sup>10</sup> [See p. 63, n. 5, above.]

of crystal in being pure in its truths, and strong, and clear and free from errors<sup>1</sup> and natural forms. And she calls it 'fount,' because from it there flow to the soul the waters of all spiritual blessings. Hence Christ our Lord, speaking with the Samaritan woman, called faith a fount, saying that in those that believed in Him He would make a fount whose water should spring up into everlasting life.<sup>2</sup> And this water was the spirit which they that believed on Him should receive in their faith.<sup>3</sup>

### If on that thy silvered surface

4. The propositions and articles which faith sets before us she calls a silvered surface. For the understanding of this and of the other lines it must be known that faith is compared to silver with respect to the propositions it teaches us, and the truths and substance which they contain in themselves are compared to gold; for that same substance which now we believe, clothed and covered with the silver of faith, we shall behold and enjoy in the life to come, fully revealed, with the gold of the faith laid bare. Wherefore David, speaking thereof, says thus: 'If you sleep between the two lots, the feathers of the dove shall be silvered, and the hinder parts of her back shall be of the colour of gold.'<sup>4</sup> He means: If we close the eyes of the understanding to things above and below (which he calls to 'sleep between') we shall remain in faith, which he calls a dove, whose feathers, which are the truths that it tells us, will be silvered, because in this life faith sets them forth to us obscurely and veiled, for which reason the Bride here calls them a silvered surface. But when this faith shall have come to an end, which will be when it is perfected through the clear vision of God, then the substance of the faith will remain, stripped of this veil of silver, and in colour as gold. So that faith gives and communicates to us God Himself, but covered with the silver of faith; but it fails not for that reason to give Him to us in truth, even as one may give a silvered vessel, which is also a vessel of gold, for, though covered with silver, it is none the less a golden vessel that he gives. Wherefore, when the Bride in the Songs desired this possession<sup>5</sup> of God, He promised it to her, so far as in this life may be, saying that He would make her earrings of gold, but enamelled with silver.<sup>6</sup> In these words He promised to give Himself to her, veiled by faith. The soul, then, now says to faith: 'Oh

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'free from truths and errors.'

<sup>2</sup> St. John iv, 14.

<sup>3</sup> St. John vii, 39.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm lxvii, 14. [A.V., lxxviii, 13. Cf. p. 64, n. 2, above.]

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'this presence.'

<sup>6</sup> Canticles i, 10.

if on that thy silvered surface . . .,' by which she means the articles aforementioned wherewith thou hast covered the gold of the Divine rays, which are the 'eyes desired,' whereof she next speaks, saying:

**Thou wouldst of a sudden form the eyes desired**

5. By the eyes she means, as we said, the Divine truths and rays; the which, as we have likewise said, are set forth to us by faith in its formless and hidden articles. And thus it is as if she were to say: Oh that Thou wouldst but give me these truths which Thou teachest me formlessly and darkly, and which are veiled in Thy articles of faith clearly and formally revealed in them according to the entreaty of my desire! And she calls these truths 'eyes' by reason of the greatness of the presence of the Beloved which she feels, so that it seems to her that she is ever gazing at it. Wherefore she says:

**Which I bear outlined in my inmost parts!**

6. She says that she bears these truths outlined in her inmost parts—that is to say, in her soul, according to the understanding and the will; for according to the understanding she has these truths infused into her soul by faith. And, because her knowledge of them is not perfect, she says that they are outlined; for, even as an outline is not a perfect painting, so the knowledge of faith is not perfect knowledge. Wherefore the truths that are infused into the soul through faith are as it were in outline, and when they are in clear vision they will be in the soul as a perfect and finished painting, according to the words of the Apostle, where he says: *Cum autem venerit quod perfectum est, evacuabitur quod ex parte est.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: When that which is perfect is come (namely, clear vision), then that which is in part<sup>2</sup> (namely, the knowledge of faith) shall be done away.

7. But besides this outline of faith there is another outline in the soul of the lover, which is of love, and this is according to the will; wherein the image of the Beloved is outlined in such manner, and so completely and vividly pictured, when there is union of love, that it is true to say that the Beloved lives in the lover and the lover in the Beloved; and such manner of likeness does love make in the transformation of the two that are in love that it may be said that each is the other and that both are one. The reason for this is that in the union and transformation of love the one gives possession of itself to the other, and each one abandons itself<sup>3</sup> to the other and exchanges itself for the other.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Sg: 'that which is temporal.'

<sup>3</sup> A. Av. B, Bg, Bz, Sg: 'abandons and gives itself.'

Thus each lives in the other, and the one is the other, and both are one through the transformation of love. It is this that Saint Paul meant when he said: *Vivo autem, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus*.<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: I live, yet not I,<sup>2</sup> but Christ liveth in me. For in saying 'I live, yet not I,'<sup>3</sup> he meant that, although he lived, his life was not his own, because he was transformed in Christ and his life was divine rather than human. Wherefore he says that it is not he that lives but Christ that lives in him.

8. So that, according to this likeness of transformation, we can say that his life and the life of Christ were one life through union of love, which in Heaven will be perfectly accomplished in the Divine life in all those who shall merit being in God; for, being transformed in God, they will live the life of God, and not their own life, and yet it will be their own life, for the life of God will be their own life. And then they will say in truth: We live, yet not we, for God liveth in us. This may come to pass in this life, as in the case of Saint Paul—not, however, in a complete and perfect way, although the soul may reach such a transformation of love as is in the Spiritual Marriage, which is the highest estate that can be attained in this life; for everything may be called an outline of love by comparison with that perfect image of transformation in glory. But when this outline of transformation is attained in this life it is a great and good happiness, because the Beloved is greatly pleased with it. For this reason, desiring that the Bride should grave Him upon her soul as an outline, He said to her in the Songs: 'Set Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm.'<sup>4</sup> The heart here signifies the soul, whereupon God is set in this life as the seal of an outline of faith, even as was said above; and the arm signifies the strong will, wherein it is as the seal of an outline of love,<sup>5</sup> as we have just now said.

9. After such manner walks the soul at this time that, albeit briefly, I will not fail to say something thereof, although by words it cannot be explained. For it appears to the soul that its bodily and its spiritual substance are dried up by thirst after this living fount of God; for its thirst is like to that which David had when he said: 'As the hart desireth the fountains of waters, so my soul desireth Thee, O God.'<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Galatians ii, 20.

<sup>2</sup> S: 'but yet not I.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'but yet not I.'

<sup>4</sup> Canticles viii, 6. Av, Bz omit: 'as a seal upon thine arm.' Ej, G: 'Set me as a seal of the outline of faith.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'as a seal outlined with love.' Sg: '... the soul, for in this life God is a seal of the outline of love.'

<sup>6</sup> A, Av, Ej, S: 'my God.'

My soul was thirsty for God, the living fount. When shall I come and appear before the face of God?<sup>1</sup> And this thirst so wearies it that it would think naught of breaking through the midst of the Philistines, as did the mighty men of David to fill his vessel of water at the well<sup>2</sup> of Bethlehem,<sup>3</sup> which was Christ; it would think naught of enduring all the difficulties of the world and the furies of evil spirits and the pains of hell in order to immerse itself in this fathomless<sup>4</sup> fount of love. For with respect to this it is said in the Songs: 'Love is strong as death and its importunity is hard as hell.'<sup>5</sup> For it cannot be believed how vehement is the yearning and the grief which the soul feels when it sees that it is gradually approaching the fruition of that blessing, and yet that this is not granted to it; for the nearer one sees that which one desires and yet is denied, the greater are the grief and the torment caused thereby.<sup>6</sup> Wherefore Job says with this spiritual intent: 'Before I eat, I sigh, and the roaring and raging of my soul are like the overflowing of the waters'<sup>7</sup>—that is, through my longing for food, by food being here understood God. Because, according to the yearning of the soul for this food, and the knowledge which it has thereof, even so is the grief which it has on account of it.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

THE reason that the soul suffers so much at this time is that, the nearer it comes to union with God, the more keenly it feels within itself its emptiness of God, and<sup>8</sup> the direst<sup>9</sup> darkness, together with spiritual fire which dries and purges it so that, when it is purified, it may be united with God. For, inasmuch as God sends not into it<sup>10</sup> any ray of supernatural light from Himself, God is intolerable darkness to it, when He is near it according to the spirit, since supernatural light darkens natural light with its excess.<sup>11</sup> All this David expressed when he said: 'Clouds and darkness are round about Him; fire goeth before His presence.'<sup>12</sup> And in another psalm he says: 'He

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xli, 3. [A.V., xlii, 1-2.]

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'to take his vessel of water to the well.'

<sup>3</sup> 1 Paralipomenon xi, 18. [A.V., 1 Chronicles xi, 18.]

<sup>4</sup> Sg: 'voluminous.'

<sup>5</sup> Canticles viii, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Sg: 'so great is the pain and greater is the torment caused thereby.'

<sup>7</sup> Job iii, 24.

<sup>8</sup> [Lit., 'and within its soul.']

<sup>9</sup> Bz, Ej, G: 'greatest.'

<sup>10</sup> A, Av, Bz, Sg [use a stronger word, very similarly pronounced and written—*derriba* for *deriva*—best translated] 'overcomes it not with.'

<sup>11</sup> G: 'any ray of supernatural light, He darkens the natural light with its excess.'

<sup>12</sup> Psalm xcvi, 2-3. [A.V., xcvi, 2-3.] Sg has 'snow' [*nieve*] for 'cloud' [*nube*].

made darkness His covert and secret place, and His tabernacle round about Him was dark water in the clouds of the air; through His great brightness in His presence there are clouds, hailstones and coals of fire,<sup>1</sup> that is to say, to the soul that is attaining. For the nearer the soul attains to Him, the more it feels within itself all that has been said, until God draws it into His Divine brightness through transformation of love. And meanwhile<sup>2</sup> the soul is ever like to Job, saying: 'Who will grant me that I might know Him and find Him and come even to His throne?'<sup>3</sup> But through the boundless pity<sup>4</sup> of God the consolations and favours that He gives are proportionate to the darknesses and emptinesses of the soul, for *sicut tenebræ ejus, ita et lumen ejus*;<sup>5</sup> for in exalting and glorifying souls He humbles and fatigues them.<sup>6</sup> And in this way He has sent the soul, even while it is thus fatigued, certain Divine rays<sup>7</sup> from Himself, with such glory and strength of love<sup>8</sup> that He has stirred up its whole being and changed its whole nature;<sup>9</sup> and thus with great natural fear and affright the soul speaks to the Beloved at the beginning of this following stanza, while the Beloved Himself<sup>10</sup> continues for the remainder of it.

### STANZA XIII

**Withdraw them, Beloved, for I fly away.**

SPOUSE:

Return thou, dove,  
For the wounded hart appears on the hill At the air of thy  
flight, and takes refreshment,

### EXPOSITION

2. In the great desires and fervent affections of love which the soul has expressed in the preceding stanzas, the Beloved is wont to visit His Bride, in a way most chaste, most delicate<sup>11</sup> and most loving and with

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xvii, 12-13. [A.V., xviii, 11-12.]

<sup>2</sup> S omits: 'And meanwhile.'

<sup>3</sup> Job xxiii, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Bg, S: 'the boundless goodness.' Ej, G: 'the goodness and pity.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm cxxxviii, 12. [A.V., cxxxix, 12.]

<sup>6</sup> S adds 'likewise.'

<sup>7</sup> B: 'certain rays of glory.'

<sup>8</sup> B: 'with such strength of love.'

<sup>9</sup> [The Spanish word, *desencafó*, means literally 'disjointed,' 'disarticulated.']

<sup>10</sup> Bz: 'the Lover Himself.'

<sup>11</sup> A, B, Bg, Bz, Sg, S: 'in a way most lofty, most delicate.' Ej, G abbreviate: 'in a way most lofty and most loving, according to the greatness of the fervours, etc.'

great strength of love. For ordinarily the favours and visits of God to the soul are wont to be great in proportion to the fervours and yearnings of love which have preceded them. And, as the soul has just now desired these Divine eyes with such great yearning, even as she has just said in the foregoing stanza, the Beloved has revealed to her some rays of His greatness and divinity, as she has desired. These rays were communicated with such loftiness and such power that the soul was made to issue forth from herself in rapture and ecstasy, which at the first is accompanied by great suffering and natural fear. And thus the soul, being unable to suffer excess in so frail a mortal form, says in the present stanza: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.' That is to say: Withdraw these Thy Divine eyes, for they make me to soar aloft, issuing forth from myself in highest contemplation above that which my physical nature can bear. This she says because it seemed to her that her soul was flying out of her body, which is what she desired: for this reason she begged Him to withdraw His eyes—that is, to communicate them no longer to her in the flesh, since in this wise she could neither bear them nor enjoy them as she would desire, but to communicate them to her in the flight which she was about to make from out of the flesh. But this desire and flight the Spouse prevented, saying: Return, dove, for the communication which thou art now receiving from Me belongs not yet to that estate of glory to which thou now aspirest. But return thou to Me, for it is I Whom thou seekest, wounded as thou art by love. And I also, Who am like to the hart wounded by thy love, now begin to reveal Myself to thee in thy lofty contemplation, and take recreation and refreshment in the love of thy contemplation. Wherefore the soul says to the Spouse:

**Withdraw them, Beloved,**

3. According as we have said, the soul, as befitted the great desires which she had<sup>1</sup> for these Divine eyes, which signify Divinity, received inwardly from the Beloved such communication and knowledge of God that it compelled her to say: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.' For such is the wretchedness of our physical nature in this life that that which is truest life to the soul and which she desires with such great desire—namely, the communication and knowledge of her Beloved, when they come and are given to her—she cannot receive without its almost costing her her life, so that when those eyes which she sought with so much solicitude and yearning, and by so many

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'according to the degrees of love and desire which it had.'

ways, are revealed to her, she may come to say:<sup>1</sup> 'Withdraw them, Beloved.'

4. For at times the torture felt<sup>2</sup> in such visits of rapture is so great that there is no torture which so wrenches asunder the bones and straitens the physical nature—so much so that unless God provided for the soul its life would come to an end. And in truth, to the soul which experiences it, it seems indeed to be ended, because it feels as though the soul is detached from the flesh and the body is unprotected. The reason for this is that such favours cannot be received by one that is wholly in the flesh, because the spirit is raised up to commune with the Divine Spirit which comes to the soul, and thus it has perforce in some manner to abandon the flesh.<sup>3</sup> And hence it is that the flesh has to suffer, and, consequently, the soul that is in the flesh, through the unity which they have in one being. Wherefore the great torture which the soul feels at the time of this kind of visit, and the great terror which comes to it as it sees itself treated in supernatural wise cause it to say: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.'

5. But it is not to be understood that, because the soul entreats Him to withdraw them, she desires their withdrawal, for that saying comes from natural fear, as we have said. Rather, though it should cost her far more, she would not willingly lose these visits and favours of the Beloved, because, although the physical nature suffers therein, the spirit soars to supernatural recollection, in order to have fruition of the Spirit of the Beloved, since it is this that she has desired and entreated. Yet she would not desire to receive it in the flesh, where it is impossible for it to be received<sup>4</sup> perfectly, but only to a slight extent and with difficulty; she would rather receive it in the flight of the spirit from out of the flesh, where she can have fruition of it freely. For this cause she said: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.' Which is to say: Cease to communicate them to me in the flesh.

### For I fly away.

6. As though she said: I fly away from the flesh that Thou mayest communicate them to me apart from it, since they are the cause making me fly from out of it. And that we may the better understand what flight is this, it is to be noted that, as we have said, in that visita-

<sup>1</sup> A: 'so that, when she finds those eyes . . . yearning, she may come to say.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg: 'the torture experienced.' Bz, B: 'the torture which she feels.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G omit: 'The reason . . . abandon the flesh.'

<sup>4</sup> [The words 'for it to be received' are not in the original.] Some MSS., to fill the gap, read: 'where it is impossible to have fruition of it perfectly.'

tion of the Divine Spirit the spirit of the soul is enraptured with great force, to communicate with the Spirit, and destroys the body,<sup>1</sup> and ceases to experience feelings and to have its actions in the body, since it has them in God. For this cause said Saint Paul, with respect to that rapture of his, that he knew not if his soul was receiving it in the body or out of the body.<sup>2</sup> It is not for this reason to be understood that the soul destroys and forsakes the body<sup>3</sup> of natural life, but that it has not its actions in it. And it is for this reason that in these raptures and flights the body remains without its senses, and, although the greatest pains be inflicted upon it, it feels them not; for this is not like other swoons and trances, which are natural, so that their subjects return to themselves with the first touch of pain. And these feelings are experienced in such visitations by those who have not yet arrived at the estate of perfection, but who are travelling along the road in the estate of progressives, for those who have already attained receive all these communications in peace and gentle love, and these raptures cease, since they were communications and preparation for the communication which crowns all.<sup>4</sup>

7. This would be a convenient place for treating of the different kinds of rapture and ecstasy and of other issuings forth and subtle flights of the spirit, which are accustomed to befall spiritual persons. But, since my intent is but to expound these stanzas briefly, as I promised in the prologue,<sup>5</sup> these other things must remain for such as can treat them better than I. And I pass over the subject likewise because the Blessed Teresa of Jesus, our mother,<sup>6</sup> left notes admirably written upon these things of the spirit, the which notes I hope in God will speedily be printed and brought to light.<sup>7</sup> That, then, which the soul says here concerning flight is to be understood of rapture and ecstasy of the spirit in God. And next the Beloved says:

### Return thou, dove,

8. Very willingly was the soul leaving the body upon that spiritual flight, thinking that its life was coming to an end, and that it would

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'and makes the body destitute.' S: 'to commune with the Divine and become destitute.'

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 2.

<sup>3</sup> S: 'that the soul makes the body destitute and forsakes it.' Av, Bg, Sg read: 'makes the body destitute' for 'forsakes the body.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the total communication.'] Av, B, Bz: 'communications which prepared for the total communication.' A, Bg [substituting *la tal* for *la total*, read]: 'for that [or 'the said'] communication.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G omit 'as I . . . prologue.'

<sup>6</sup> A, B, Bg, Ej, G, Sg omit: 'our mother.'

<sup>7</sup> B, Bg, Ej, G omit: 'the which . . . to light.'

be able to have fruition of its Spouse for ever and remain with Him unhindered by a veil. But the Spouse prevented its flight, saying: 'Return thou, dove.' As though He had said: O dove, in the quick and lofty flight of thy contemplation, and in the love wherewith thou burnest, and the simplicity wherein thou goest (for the dove has these three properties<sup>1</sup>), return thou from this lofty flight wherein thou aspirest to attain to possession of Me in truth, for not yet has the time arrived for such lofty knowledge. And adapt thyself to this lower knowledge that I now communicate to thee in this thy excess.<sup>2</sup>

### For the wounded hart . . .<sup>3</sup>

9. The Spouse compares Himself to the hart, for by the hart He here means Himself. It must be known that the characteristic of the hart is to mount up to high places, and when wounded it goes with great haste to seek refreshment in the cool waters; and if it hears its mate complain and perceives that she is wounded it goes straightway to her and fondles and caresses her. Even so does the Spouse now, for, seeing that the Bride is wounded for love of Him, He comes when she sighs, wounded in like manner with love of her, for in those that are in love with each other the wound of one is the wound of both and the two have one and the same feeling. And thus it is as if He had said: Return thou, My Bride, for if thou goest wounded with love for Me, I also, like the hart, come to thee wounded in this thy wound, Who am as the hart; and I also appear on the heights. For which reason He says:

### . . . appears on the hill<sup>4</sup>

10. That is, through the loftiness of the contemplation which thou hast in this flight. For contemplation is a lofty height, from which in this life God begins to commune with the soul and reveal Himself to it, but not completely. For this reason He says not that He has appeared completely, but that He 'appears,' for, however sublime the degrees of knowledge of God which are given to the soul in this life, they are all as very devious<sup>5</sup> appearances. There follows the third characteristic of the hart, whereof we spoke, which is that contained in the line following:

### At the air of thy flight, and takes refreshment.

<sup>1</sup> Jaén, Ej omit: 'three.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G omit: 'in this thy excess.'

<sup>3</sup> Sg omits the commentary on this line.

<sup>4</sup> B omits the commentaries on this and the next line.

<sup>5</sup> [*muyl desviadas asomadas*] Av has 'divided' [*dívisas*] for 'devious.'

11. By flight He means contemplation in that ecstasy whereof we have spoken, and by the air He means that spirit of love which this flight of contemplation produces in the soul. And this love which is produced by the flight He here most appropriately calls 'air,' for the Holy Spirit, Who is love, is also compared to air in the Divine Scripture, since He is the breath of the Father and the Son. And, even as there He is the air of the flight—that is, He proceeds from the contemplation and wisdom of the Father and the Son,<sup>1</sup> and is breathed—so here the Spouse calls this love of the soul air, because it proceeds from the contemplation and knowledge which at this time the soul has of God. And it is to be noted that the Spouse says not here that He is coming at the flight, but at the air of the flight, for properly speaking God communicates not Himself to the soul through the flight of the soul—which is, as we have said, the knowledge that it has of God—but through the love which comes from that knowledge; for, even as love is union of the Father and the Son, even so also is it union of the soul with God. Hence it comes that, although a soul have the loftiest knowledge of God, and contemplation, and knowledge of all mysteries, if it have not love it profiteth it nothing, as Saint Paul says,<sup>2</sup> towards union with God. As likewise that same Apostle said: *Charitatem habete, quod est vinculum perfectionis.*<sup>3</sup> That is to say: Have charity, which is the bond of perfection. This charity, then, and love of the soul, brings the Spouse running to drink of this fount of the love of His Bride, even as the fresh water-brooks bring the thirsting and wounded hart to taste their coolness. Wherefore the line continues: 'And takes refreshment.'

12. For even as the air brings coolness and refreshment to him that is fatigued with the heat, so does this air of love refresh and recreate him that burns with the fire of love. For this fire of love has such properties that the air which affords it coolness and refreshment is an increased fire of love; for, in the lover, love<sup>4</sup> is a flame which burns with the desire of burning more, as does the flame of natural fire. Wherefore He here describes as refreshment the fulfilment of this desire of His to burn more in the ardour of love for His Bride, which is the air of her flight. And thus it is as though He said: It burns more at the ardour of thy flight, for one love enkindles another. Here it is to be noted that God sets not His grace and love in the soul save according to the will and love of the soul; for which cause he that is truly in love must see that this love fail not, for by this means, as we have said, it

<sup>1</sup> S adds: 'through the will.'

<sup>3</sup> Colossians iii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii. 2.

<sup>4</sup> B. Bg have 'the fire of love' for 'love.'

will (if we may so say) move God the more to have more love for the soul<sup>1</sup> and to find more refreshment in it. And, in order to follow after<sup>2</sup> this charity, it must practise that which the Apostle says thereof, where he writes: 'Charity is patient, is kind; envieth not, doeth no evil,<sup>3</sup> is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth;<sup>4</sup> beareth all things which have to be borne; believeth all things (that is, those which ought to be believed); hopeth all things; endureth all things'—namely, those which are in accord with charity.<sup>5</sup>

#### ANNOTATION AND ARGUMENT OF THE TWO STANZAS FOLLOWING<sup>6</sup>

**N**ow as this little dove, which is the soul, was flying on the breezes of love above the waters of the flood (namely, those her fatigues and yearnings of love which she has described up to this point) and found no rest for her foot, upon this last flight which we have described, the compassionate father Noe put forth the hand of his mercy, and caught her, and brought her into the ark of his charity and love;<sup>7</sup> and this was at the time when, in the stanza that we have just expounded, the Spouse said: 'Return thou, dove.' In the which recollection the soul, finding all that she has desired and more than she can express, begins to sing praises to her Beloved, relating the great things which she feels and enjoys in this union in Him in the two following stanzas, saying:

#### STANZAS XIV AND XV

**My Beloved, the mountains, The solitary, wooded valleys,  
The strange islands, the sonorous rivers, The whisper of the  
amorous breezes,**

**The tranquil night, At the time of the rising of the dawn,  
The silent music, the sounding solitude, The supper that  
recreates and enkindles love.**

<sup>1</sup> [*a que Dios le tenga más amor.*]

<sup>2</sup> [*seguir.*] Ej, S have *conseguir*, 'to attain to.'

<sup>3</sup> B, Bg omit the rest of the paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G omit the rest of the paragraph.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 4-6. Bz abbreviates the last phrase: 'that is, those which have to be believed and are in accord with charity.'

<sup>6</sup> Thus S. Jaén and Sg have: 'Annotation for the stanza following.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G: 'into the ark of his breast and love.' [Genesis viii, 9.]

## ANNOTATION

2. Before we enter upon the exposition of these stanzas it is necessary to explain, for the better intelligence thereof and of the stanzas which follow them, that by this spiritual flight which we have just described is denoted a lofty estate and union of love wherein after much spiritual exercise God is wont to place the soul,<sup>1</sup> which is called spiritual betrothal with the Word, the Son of God. And at the beginning, when this is done for the first time, God communicates to the soul great things concerning Himself, beautifying it with greatness and majesty, decking it with gifts and virtues, and clothing it with knowledge and honour of God, just as if it were a bride on the day of her betrothal. And upon this happy day, not only is there an end of the soul's former vehement yearnings and complaints of love, but, being adorned with the good things which I am describing, she enters into an estate of peace and delight and sweetness of love, as is described in the present stanzas,<sup>2</sup> wherein she does naught else but relate and sing the wonders of her Beloved, which she knows and enjoys in Him, by means of the aforementioned union of the betrothal. And thus, in the remainder of the stanzas following,<sup>3</sup> she speaks not of pains or yearnings as she did aforetime, but of the communication and exercise of sweet and peaceful love with her Beloved, since in this estate all those other things are now ended. And it is to be noted that in these two stanzas is contained the most that God is wont to communicate to a soul<sup>4</sup> at this time; but it is not to be understood that to all such as arrive at this estate He communicates all that is expounded in these two stanzas, nor that He does so according to one single way and degree of knowledge and feeling. For to some souls He gives more and to others less; to some after one manner and to others after another; though souls belonging to either category can be in this estate of the Spiritual Betrothal. But we set down here the highest that is possible because in this is comprehended all else. And the exposition follows.

## EXPOSITION OF THE TWO STANZAS

3. And it is to be noted that, even as in the Ark of Noe, as the Divine Scripture tells us, there were many mansions for many different

<sup>1</sup> A, B, Bg abbreviate: 'that in this spiritual flight God is wont to place the soul.'

<sup>2</sup> Av: 'in the following stanzas.'

<sup>3</sup> A omits 'following.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg add: 'by way of betrothal.'

kinds of animal, and every kind of food which they could eat, even so, in this flight<sup>1</sup> which it makes to this Divine Ark of the bosom of God, the soul not only sees therein the many mansions which His Majesty described in Saint John,<sup>2</sup> saying that they were in His Father's house, but sees and knows that all kinds of food are there—that is, all the grandeurs which can please the soul, which are all the things that are contained in the two stanzas above-mentioned, and are signified by those words used in common parlance, the substance of which is as follows.

4. In this Divine union the soul sees and tastes abundance, inestimable riches, finds all the rest and the recreation that it desires and understands strange kinds of knowledge and secrets of God, which is another of those kinds of food that it likes best. It feels likewise in God an awful power and strength which transcends all other power and strength: it tastes a marvellous sweetness<sup>3</sup> and spiritual delight, finds true rest and Divine light and has lofty experience of the knowledge of God, which shines forth in the harmony of the creatures and the acts of God. Likewise it feels itself to be full of good things and far withdrawn from evil things and empty of them; and, above all, it experiences, and has fruition of, an inestimable feast of love, which confirms it in love, and this is the substance of that which is contained in the two stanzas aforementioned.

5. In these stanzas the Bride says that her Beloved is all these things, both in Himself and also for her;<sup>4</sup> for in that which God is wont to communicate in such excesses<sup>5</sup> the soul feels and knows the truth of that saying which Saint Francis<sup>6</sup> uttered, namely: 'God mine, and all things.' Wherefore, since God is all things to the soul, and the good of them all, the communication of this excess is explained by the similitude of the goodness of the things in the said stanzas,<sup>7</sup> which we shall expound line by line. Herein must be understood that all that is expounded here is in God in an eminent and an infinite manner, or, to express it better, each of these grandeurs which are spoken of is God, and they are all of them God; for, inasmuch as in this case the soul is united with God,<sup>8</sup> it feels that all things are God, even as Saint John

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'in this Divine flight.'

<sup>2</sup> St. John xiv, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Sg: 'marvellous subtlety.'

<sup>4</sup> [*y lo es para ella*.] Jaén, A, Av, Bg, Bz, Sg read: *y lo espera ella* ['and she awaits Him' (or 'it') Cf. p. 74, n. 1, above].

<sup>5</sup> A: 'in such exercises.'

<sup>6</sup> Av: 'which the seraphic father St. Francis.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'by the similitude of the will of the things and of their goodness in these stanzas.'

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'is united with God in one simple being.'

felt when he said: *Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat.*<sup>1</sup> That is to say: That which was made in Him was life. It is not to be understood that, in that which the soul is here said to feel, it is, as it were, seeing things in the light, or creatures in God, but that in that possession the soul feels that all things are God to it.<sup>2</sup> Neither is it to be understood that, because the soul has such lofty feelings concerning God in that which we are saying, it sees God essentially and clearly, for this is no more than a powerful and abundant communication, and a glimpse of that which He is in Himself, wherein the soul feels this goodness concerning the things which we shall expound in these lines, as follows:

### **My Beloved, the mountains,<sup>3</sup>**

6. The mountains have height; they are abundant, extensive and beautiful, graceful, flowery and fragrant. These mountains my Beloved is to me.

### **The solitary, wooded valleys,**

7. The solitary valleys are quiet, pleasant, cool, shady, abounding in fresh water; and with the variety of their groves and the sweet song of the birds they greatly recreate and delight the senses, in their solitude<sup>4</sup> and silence giving refreshment and rest. These valleys my Beloved is to me.

### **The strange islands,**

8. The strange islands are girt around by the sea, and are far away over the sea, withdrawn and aloof from communication with men. Thus there are produced and bred in them things very different from those in our own experience, of very strange kinds and with virtues never seen by men, so that they cause great surprise and wonder in those that see them. And thus, by reason of the great and marvellous wonders and the strange knowledge, far removed from the knowledge of every day, that the soul sees in God, He is here called strange islands. There are two reasons for calling a man strange: either because he lives in retirement from men or because he is excellent and singular among other men in his deeds and works. For both these reasons the soul here speaks of God as strange; for not only has He all the strangeness of islands which have never been seen, but likewise His ways, counsels<sup>5</sup> and works are very strange and new and marvellous to men.

<sup>1</sup> St. John i, 4. Cf. p. 57, n. 2, above.

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'but that . . . to it.'

<sup>3</sup> G, Sg: 'My beloved to the mountains.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'in gentleness.' Ej, G, Sg omit 'and rest.' Bz omits 'and silence.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg: 'His ways, His rich counsels.'

And it is no marvel if God is strange to men who have never seen Him, since He is strange also to the holy angels and the souls who see Him; for they cannot see Him perfectly, nor shall they so see Him, and until the last day of judgment they will continually be seeing in Him so many things that are new according to His profound judgments, concerning the works of mercy and justice, that they will wonder continually and marvel ever more. So that not men alone, but likewise angels, can speak of Him as of strange islands; only to Himself is He not strange, neither to Himself is He new.

### The sonorous rivers,

9. Rivers have three properties: the first is that they assail and submerge all that they meet;<sup>1</sup> the second, that they fill up all the low and hollow places that are in their path; the third, that their sound is such as to drown and take the place of all sounds else. And because in this communication of God which we are describing the soul feels in herself these three properties most delectably, she says that her Beloved is the sonorous rivers. With respect to the first property that the soul feels, it must be known that she feels herself to be assailed by the torrent of the Spirit of God in this case, in such a manner, and taken possession of thereby with such force, that it seems to her that all the rivers of the world are coming upon her and assailing her, and she feels that all her actions are whelmed thereby, and all the passions which she had aforetime. Yet though this is an experience of such violence, it is not for that reason an experience of torment; for these rivers are rivers of peace, even as God declares through Isaias, saying, concerning this assault upon the soul: *Ecce ego declinabo super eam quasi fluvium pacis, et quasi torrentem inundantem gloriam.*<sup>2</sup> Which is to say: Take note and be warned that I will come down upon her (that is to say, upon the soul) and assail her like a river of peace and like a torrent which overflows with glory as it advances. And thus this Divine assault which God makes<sup>3</sup> upon the soul, resembling the assault of sonorous rivers, fills it wholly with peace and glory. The second property which the soul feels is that this Divine water at this time fills up the low places of its humility and also fills the empty places of its desires, even as Saint Luke says: *Exaltavit humiles. Esurientes implevit bonis.*<sup>4</sup> Which is to

<sup>1</sup> S: 'all into which they enter.'

<sup>2</sup> Isaias lxvi, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'Thus at this time this assault of God fills the low and empty places—[this assault] which God makes, etc.'

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke i, 52-3.

say: He hath exalted the humble, and hath filled the hungry with good things. The third property that the soul feels in the sonorous rivers of its Beloved is a spiritual voice and noise<sup>1</sup> which is above all sounds and voices, the which voice drowns every other voice and its sound exceeds all the sounds in the world. And in the exposition hereof we must occupy ourselves for some little space.

10. This voice or sonorous sound of these rivers which the soul here describes is a fulfilment<sup>2</sup> so abundant that it fills the soul with good things, and a power so powerful that it possesses the soul and appears to her not merely as the sound of rivers but as most powerful thunderings. But this voice is a spiritual voice and is unaccompanied by those physical sounds, and by the pain and trouble of them, but is accompanied rather by grandeur, strength, power, delight and glory; and thus it is as an immense and inward sound and voice, which clothes the soul with power and strength. This spiritual voice<sup>3</sup> and sound was heard in the spirits of the Apostles at the time when the Holy Spirit, in a vehement torrent (as is said in the Acts of the Apostles), descended upon them; when, in order that the spiritual voice<sup>4</sup> that was speaking to them from within might be made manifest, this sound was heard from without as a vehement wind, in such wise that it was heard by all who were in Jerusalem:<sup>5</sup> whereby, as we say, was denoted that which the Apostles received inwardly, which was, as we have said, a fulfilment of power and strength. And likewise, when the Lord Jesus was praying to the Father in the peril and anguish which were caused Him by His enemies, as is said in Saint John,<sup>6</sup> there came to Him an inward voice from Heaven, strengthening Him according to His humanity, which sound the Jews heard from without, and so solemn was it, and so mighty, that some said it had thundered, and others, that some angel from Heaven had spoken to Him; and by that voice which was heard from without was denoted and signified the strength and power given to Christ, according to His humanity, from within; yet by this it is not to be understood that the soul fails to receive in the spirit the sound of the spiritual voice. It must be noted that the spiritual voice is the effect<sup>7</sup> which the voice makes upon the

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G: 'is a spiritual voice and sonorous sound.' Sg: 'is a spiritual voice and sound.'  
Bz: 'is a spiritual voice and river.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G: 'is an accumulation.'

<sup>3</sup> A has *gozo* ['joy'] for *voz* ['voice'].

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg have 'the interior voice' and omit 'from within.'

<sup>5</sup> Acts ii, 2.

<sup>6</sup> St. John xii, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Bg: 'is the fruit.'

soul, even as the physical voice impresses its sound upon the ear and its intelligence upon the spirit. This was in the mind of David when he said: *Ecce dabit voci suæ vocem virtutis*.<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: Behold, God will give to His voice a voice of virtue, the which virtue is the voice within. When David said that He would give His voice a voice of virtue he meant that<sup>2</sup> to the outward voice, which is heard in outward wise, He would give a voice of such virtue that it would be heard within. By this it must be understood that God is an infinite voice, and that, communicating Himself to the soul after the said manner, He produces the effect of an immense voice.

11. This voice Saint John heard in the Apocalypse, and he says of the voice that he heard from Heaven: *Erat*<sup>3</sup> *tanquam vocem aquarum multarum*, and, *tanquam vocem tonitruui magni*.<sup>4</sup> Which is to say, That the voice which he heard was as a voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder. And that it may not be inferred that this voice, because it was so great, was harsh and disagreeable, he adds at once that this same voice was so soft that *erat sicut citharedorum citharizantium in citharis suis*.<sup>5</sup> Which signifies: It was as of many harpers who harped upon their harps. And Ezechiel says that this sound as of many waters was *quasi sonum sublimis Dei*,<sup>6</sup> which is to say, as a sound of the Most High God. That is, that He communicated Himself therein after a manner most high and likewise most gentle. This voice is infinite, for, as we said, it is God Himself Who communicates Himself, speaking in the soul: but He limits Himself by the capacity of each soul, uttering a voice of such virtue as befits its limitations; and He produces in the soul great delight and grandeur. And for this cause the Bride said in the Songs: *Sonet vox tua in auribus meis, vox enim tua dulcis*.<sup>7</sup> Which signifies: Let Thy voice sound in my ears, for Thy voice is sweet. The line continues:

### The whisper of the amorous breezes.

12. Of two things the soul makes mention in this present line, namely, of breezes and of a whisper. By the amorous breezes are here understood the virtues and graces<sup>8</sup> of the Beloved, which, by means of the said union of the Spouse, assail the soul, communicate themselves

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxvii, 34. [A.V., lxxviii, 33.]

<sup>2</sup> Av abbreviates: '... the voice within; which is as much as to say that, etc.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'that he heard from Heaven, that it was,' etc.

<sup>4</sup> Apocalypse xiv, 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Ezechiel i, 24.

<sup>7</sup> Canticles ii, 14. Ej, G omit the rest of the paragraph.

<sup>8</sup> Bg: 'and grandeurs.'

most lovingly and touch it in its substance. And by the whisper of these breezes is meant a most lofty<sup>1</sup> and most delectable knowledge of God, and of His virtues, the which overflows into the understanding at the touch which these virtues of God effect in the substance of the soul: and this is the supreme delight which is contained in all things that the soul here experiences.

13. And in order that what has been said may be the better understood, it must be noted that even as two things are perceived in the air—namely, the touch thereof and the sound or whisper—so in this communication of the Spouse two other things are perceived—namely, feeling of delight, and knowledge. And even as the touch of the air is felt with the sense of touch and the whisper of the same air is heard by the ear, even so likewise the touch of the virtues of the Beloved is felt and enjoyed with the sense of touch<sup>2</sup> of this soul which is in its substance;<sup>3</sup> and the knowledge of these virtues of God is felt in the ear of the soul, which is the understanding. And it must be known likewise that the amorous breeze is said to have come when it strikes delectably, satisfying the appetite of him that so greatly desired this refreshment, for then the sense of touch is soothed and refreshed, and with this soothing of the sense of touch the ear experiences great soothing and delight in the sound and whisper of the air, much more than does the sense of touch in the touch of the air;<sup>4</sup> for the sound in the ear is more spiritual, or, to speak more exactly, comes nearer to the spiritual, than the sense of touch; wherefore the delight which it causes is more spiritual than that which is caused by the sense of touch.<sup>5</sup>

14. Precisely because this touch of God brings great satisfaction and comfort to the substance of the soul, and sweetly fulfils its desire, which was to be in this union, the said union, or touch, is spoken of as 'amorous breezes'; for, as we have said, in it are communicated to the soul, lovingly and sweetly, the virtues of the Beloved, whence is derived in the understanding the whisper of knowledge. And it is called a whisper because, even as the whisper which is caused by the air enters subtly<sup>6</sup> into the organ of hearing, even so this most subtle

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G: 'a most abundant'; Sg: 'a most loving.'

<sup>2</sup> [*con el tacto*. To distinguish *tacto* from *toque*, both of which words are normally translated 'touch,' the former is rendered 'sense of touch' in this paragraph.] A has *contacto* for *con el tacto* [reading: 'the touch of the virtues feels and enjoys contact with this soul'].

<sup>3</sup> S adds: 'by means of the will.'

<sup>4</sup> Av: 'than does the [sense of] touch of the air in the touch (*toque*) which it receives.'

<sup>5</sup> A modifies: 'has come nearer to the spiritual than that which is caused by the sense of touch.' Ej, G read very similarly.

<sup>6</sup> B, Bg: 'enters lovingly and subtly.'

and delicate knowledge enters with marvellous sweetness and delight into the inmost substance of the soul, which is a far greater delight than any other. The reason is that substance of understanding is given to it, stripped of accidents and imaginary forms, for it is given to the understanding that is called by philosophers 'passive' or 'possible,' because it receives it passively, doing naught on its own behalf; which is the principal delight of the soul, because it is in the understanding, wherein, as theologians say, consists fruition, which is to see God. Since this whisper signifies the said substantial knowledge, some theologians think that our father<sup>1</sup> Elias saw God in that gentle whisper of the breeze which he felt on the mount at the mouth of his cave. The Scripture calls it a gentle whisper of the breeze, because from the subtle and delicate communication of the Spirit knowledge<sup>2</sup> was born to it in the understanding; and the soul here calls it a 'whisper of amorous breezes,'<sup>3</sup> because from the amorous communication of the virtues of her Beloved it overflows into her understanding, wherefore she calls it a 'whisper of amorous breezes.'

15. This Divine whisper, which enters by the ear of the soul, is not only substance which I have called that of understanding, but likewise it is the manifestation of truths concerning the Divinity and the revelation of His hidden secrets; for ordinarily, when<sup>4</sup> some communication of God is found in the Divine Scriptures, and is said to enter by the ear, it is found to be a manifestation of these naked truths in the understanding, or a revelation of secrets of God, which are purely spiritual visions or revelations, given to the soul alone, without the help and aid of the senses, and so, when it is said that God communicates by the ear, that expression describes a very sublime and certain fact. Thus when Saint Paul wished to describe the loftiness of his revelation he said not, *Vidit arcana verba*, still less *Gustavit arcana verba*, but *Audivit arcana verba, quæ non licet homini loqui*.<sup>5</sup> Which is as though he had said: I heard secret words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. As to this, it is thought that he saw God as did our father<sup>6</sup> Elias in that whisper. For even as faith, as Saint Paul says likewise, comes by bodily hearing, even so that which faith teaches us, which is the substance of understanding, comes by spiritual hearing. This was clearly expressed by the prophet Job, when he spoke with God, Who had revealed Himself to him, saying: *Auditu auris audivi te*,

<sup>1</sup> A, B, Bg omit 'our father.'

<sup>2</sup> A has 'the communication' for 'knowledge.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej omits the rest of the paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> A, Av, B, Bg, Bz, Ej, G, Sg, S: 'whenever.'

<sup>5</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 4.

<sup>6</sup> A, B, Bg omit 'our father.'

*nunc autem oculus meus videt te.*<sup>1</sup> That is to say: With the hearing of the ear I heard Thee, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherein it is clearly declared that to hear Him with the ear of the soul is to see Him with the eye of passive understanding whereof we spoke. Wherefore he says not: I heard Thee with the hearing 'of my ears,' but 'of my ear'; nor: I saw Thee 'with mine eyes,' but 'with mine eye,' which is the understanding. Wherefore this hearing of the soul is seeing with the understanding.

16. And it is not to be understood that, because this which the soul understands is naked substance, as we have said, it is perfect and clear fruition, as in Heaven; for, although it is free from accidents, it is not for that reason clear, but rather it is dark, for it is contemplation, which, as Saint Dionysius says, is in this life a ray of darkness;<sup>2</sup> wherefore we can say that it is a ray and image of fruition,<sup>3</sup> inasmuch as it is in the understanding, wherein consists fruition. This substance of understanding, which the soul here calls a whisper, is the 'desired eyes,' whereof the soul said, when the Beloved revealed them to her (because she could not bear the perception of them): 'Withdraw them, Beloved.'

17. And, as I think that in this place a passage in Job is very much to the point, as confirming a great part of that which I have said of this rapture and betrothal, I will relate it here,<sup>4</sup> although it may delay us a little longer, and I will expound the parts of it that are to our purpose. And first I will give it wholly in Latin and then wholly in the vulgar tongue, and afterwards I will briefly expound that part of it which concerns our purpose;<sup>5</sup> and having ended this I will continue the exposition of the lines of the next stanza. Eliphaz the Themanite, then, in the Book of Job, speaks after this manner: *Porro ad me dictum est verbum absconditum, et quasi furtive suscepit auris mea venas susurri eius. In horrore visionis nocturnæ, quando solet sopor occupare homines, pavor tenuit me, et tremor, et omnia ossa mea perterrita sunt: et cum spiritus, me præsentem, transiret, inhorruerunt pili carnis meæ: stetit quidam, cujus non agnoscebam vultum, imago coram oculis meis, et vocem quasi auræ lenis audiui.*<sup>6</sup> Which in the vulgar tongue signifies:

<sup>1</sup> Job xlii, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *De Mystica Theologia*: Migne, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. III, p. 999.

<sup>3</sup> Jaén has: 'ray of image of fruition.' [P. Silverio adopts this reading.]

<sup>4</sup> B, Bg omit the following passage: ('although . . . next stanza').

<sup>5</sup> Av, Sg omit 'And first . . . concerns our purpose.'

<sup>6</sup> Job iv, 12-16. Ej, G, Sg, omitting the Latin text, have: 'Leaving aside the Latin, that which he means in the vulgar tongue is.' Av substitutes for the Latin text '*Porro a me dictum est usque lenis audiui.*'

In truth a hidden word was spoken to me, and mine ear received as it were by stealth the veins of its whisper. In the horror of the vision by night, when sleep is wont to occupy men, I was occupied by fear and trembling, and all my bones shook; and, as the spirit passed before my presence, the skin<sup>1</sup> of my flesh shrank; and there came before me One Whose countenance I knew not, an image before mine eyes, and I heard a voice of a gentle breeze. In this passage is contained almost all that we have here said concerning this rapture, from the twelfth stanza,<sup>2</sup> which says: 'Withdraw them, Beloved,' down to this point. For in that which Eliphaz the Themanite says, namely, that a hidden word was spoken to him, is signified that hidden thing which was given to the soul, the greatness whereof it could not suffer, so that it said: 'Withdraw them, Beloved.'

18. In this saying that his ear received, as it were by stealth, the veins of its whisper, is signified the naked substance which, as we have said, is received by the understanding: for veins here denote inward substance, and the whisper signifies that communication and touch<sup>3</sup> of the virtues from which the said substance of understanding is communicated to the understanding. And the soul here calls it a whisper, because such a communication is very gentle, even as in that other place she calls it 'amorous breezes,' because it communicates itself amorously. He says that he received it as it were by stealth, because even as that which is stolen belongs to another, even so that secret did not belong to man, speaking after the manner of nature: for he received that which was not according to his nature, wherefore it was not lawful for him to receive it,<sup>4</sup> as it was not lawful for Saint Paul to repeat that which he had heard. Wherefore the other Prophet said twice: 'My secret to myself.'<sup>5</sup> And when Eliphaz speaks of the horror of the vision by night, when sleep is wont to occupy man, and says that he himself has been occupied by fear and trembling, he refers to the fear and trembling which is caused naturally in the soul by that communication of rapture which we said human nature could not suffer in the communication of the Spirit of God. For this Prophet declares here that, as at the time when men go to rest they are wont to be oppressed and terrified by a vision which they call a nightmare, which comes to them between sleep and waking—the point when sleep begins—even so at the time of this spiritual

<sup>1</sup> S: 'the hairs.' [Cf. Job iv, 15, A.V.]

<sup>2</sup> It is really from the thirteenth stanza, but only Ej, G, Sg give it correctly.

<sup>3</sup> A has for 'touch' (*toque*) 'intercourse,' 'commerce' (*trato*).

<sup>4</sup> Above these words, in A.V., a corrector has written: 'to say it.'

<sup>5</sup> Isaías xxiv, 16. Ej, G actually give the phrase twice.

transit from the sleep of natural ignorance to the waking of supernatural knowledge, which is the beginning of rapture or ecstasy, the spiritual vision which is then communicated to them fills them with fear and trembling.<sup>1</sup>

19. And he adds further that all his bones were terrified, or shaken. Which is as though he had said that they were moved and dislocated<sup>2</sup> from out of their places; wherein is described the great dislocation of the bones which, as we have said, is suffered at this time. This was clearly expressed by Daniel, when he saw the angel, and said: *Domine, in visione tua dissolutæ sunt compages meæ.*<sup>3</sup> That is: Lord, in Thy vision the joints of my bones have become loosed. And in that which he then says, which is: 'And as the spirit passed before my presence'—that is to say, when He made my spirit pass beyond its limits and natural ways by means of the rapture whereof we have spoken—'the skin<sup>4</sup> of my flesh shrank,' he describes that which we have said concerning the body, which in this transit is frozen so that the flesh shrinks like that of a dead man.

20. The passage continues: 'There was One Whose countenance I knew not, an image before mine eyes.' This One Who he says was present was God, Who communicated Himself after the manner aforementioned. And he says that he knew not His countenance, in order to indicate that in this communication and vision, most lofty though it be, the face and the Essence of God are neither known nor seen. But he says that it was an image before his eyes: for, as we have said, that knowledge of the hidden word was most sublime, as it were the image and trace<sup>5</sup> of God, but it is not to be understood that such knowledge is the essential vision of God.

21. The passage then concludes, saying: 'And I heard a voice of a gentle breeze.' By this is understood the whisper of the amorous breezes, to which the soul here<sup>6</sup> likens her Beloved. It is not to be understood that they always come to pass<sup>7</sup> in these visits with these natural distresses and fears, which, as has been said, are the lot of those that are beginning to enter the estate of illumination and perfection, and to

<sup>1</sup> A: 'the spiritual union which is then communicated to them makes them to tremble and fear.'

<sup>2</sup> [The word used here, *desencajaron*, is rather stronger than that of] Av and the first redaction: *descasaron*. A has *descansaron* ('rested') [an evident slip].

<sup>3</sup> Daniel x, 16.

<sup>4</sup> S: 'the hairs.'

<sup>5</sup> [*rástro*.] Thus Jaén and Ej. The other authorities have *rostro* ('face').

<sup>6</sup> A adds: 'in this present stanza.'

<sup>7</sup> Sg: 'come.'

experience this kind of communication; for in others these things are accompanied rather by great sweetness. The exposition continues:

### The tranquil night,

22. This spiritual sleep which the soul has in the bosom of its Beloved comprises enjoyment of all the calm and rest and quiet of the peaceful night, and it receives in God together with this a profound and dark Divine intelligence; and for this reason the Bride says that her Beloved is to her 'the tranquil night.'

### At the time of the rising of the dawn,

23. But this tranquil night, she says, is not as the dark night, but as the night which is already near the rising of the morning; that is, it appears together with the rising because this calm and quiet<sup>1</sup> in God is not complete darkness to the soul, as is the dark night, but it is tranquillity and quiet in the Divine light, in a new knowledge of God, wherein the spirit is most gently tranquil, being raised to the Divine light. And here she very fitly calls this Divine light the rising of the dawn, which means the morning; for, even as the rising of the morning dispels the darkness of the night and reveals the light of the day, even so this spirit that is tranquil and quiet in God is raised from the darkness of natural knowledge to the morning light of the supernatural knowledge of God—not brightly, but, as we say, darkly, like the night at the time of the rising of the dawn; for even as the night at the time of such rising is neither wholly night nor wholly day, but, as men say, 'between two lights,' so this Divine tranquillity and solitude is neither informed with the Divine light in all its clearness nor does it fail in some measure to participate thereof.

24. In this tranquillity the understanding sees itself raised up in a new and strange way, above all natural understanding, to the Divine light, much as one who, after a long sleep, opens his eyes to the light which he was not expecting. This knowledge, as I understand, was indicated by David when he said: *Vigilavi, et factus sum sicut passer solitarius in tecto.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: I awakened and became like to the sparrow all alone on the house-top. As though he had said: I opened the eyes of my understanding and I found myself above all

<sup>1</sup> Thus Jaén, Ej, G: '... the rising of the dawn of the morning; because it appears with the rising; this calm and quiet,' etc. Sg: '... the rising of the dawn, which is the morning; because, that is, this calm and quiet in Divine light appear with the rising.' A, Av, B, Bg, Bz, S: '... the rising of the morning, because this calm and quiet,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm ci, 8. [A.V., cii, 7.]

kinds of natural knowledge, all alone, without them, upon the house-top—that is, above all things here below. And he says that he became like to the sparrow that is all alone, because in this manner of contemplation the spirit has the properties of this sparrow, which are five. First, it ordinarily perches upon the highest places, even as the spirit, in this experience, engages in the highest contemplation. Second, it ever keeps its beak turned towards the direction of the wind, even as the spirit here turns the beak of its affection towards the direction whence comes the spirit of love, which is God. Third, it is ordinarily alone and will have no other bird whatsoever near to it, so that, when any other settles<sup>1</sup> beside it, it flies away. Even so the spirit in this contemplation is withdrawn from all things, detached from them all and<sup>2</sup> consenting to naught save solitude in God. The fourth property is that it sings very sweetly; even so does the spirit sing to God at this time, for the praises which it makes to God are of sweetest love, most delectable to itself and most precious to God. The fifth is that it is of no definite colour; even so is the perfect spirit, which in this excess not only has no colour<sup>3</sup> of sensual affection and love of self, but has not even any particular consideration of things above or below, neither can it speak thereof in any method or manner, for that which possesses it is the fathomless knowledge of God, even as we have said.

### The silent music,<sup>4</sup>

25. In that aforesaid tranquillity and silence of the night, and in that knowledge of the Divine light, the soul is able to see a marvellous fitness and disposition of the wisdom of God in the diversities of all His creatures and works, all and each of which are endowed<sup>5</sup> with a certain response to God, whereby each after its manner testifies to that which God is in it, so that it seems to hear a harmony of sublimest music surpassing all concerts and melodies of the world. The Bride calls this music silent because, as we have said, it is a tranquil and quiet intelligence, without sound of voices; and in it are thus enjoyed both the sweetness of the music and the quiet of the silence. And so she says that her Beloved is this silent music, because this harmony of spiritual music is known and experienced in Him. Not only so but likewise He is

### The sounding solitude,

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg have 'arrives,' and S has 'stops,' for 'settles.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'from all things of the world, flees from them all and is,' etc.

<sup>3</sup> So Av, Ej, G, Sg, S. Jaén and certain other authorities omit 'no,' thus clearly reversing the Saint's meaning.

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit the commentary on this line.

<sup>5</sup> Thus Av, Bg. Other versions read: *de todas* ('of all') for *dotadas* ('endowed').

26. This is almost the same as silent music; for, although that music is silent to the senses and the natural faculties, it is a most sounding solitude to the spiritual faculties; for when these are alone and empty of all natural forms and apprehensions they can readily and most sonorously receive in the spirit the spiritual sound<sup>1</sup> of the excellence of God, in Himself and in His creatures, according to that which, as we said above, Saint John saw in spirit in the Apocalypse—namely, when he heard the voice of many harpers who harped upon their harps.<sup>2</sup> This was in the spirit: he speaks not of material harps, but of a certain knowledge which he had of the praises of the blessed, which each one, according to his own degree of glory, makes to God continually. And this is like music, for as each one possesses the gifts of God in a different degree, even so does each one sing the praises of God in a different degree, yet all make one harmony of love, just as in music.

27. After this same manner the soul is able to see, in that tranquil wisdom, how of all the creatures—not the higher creatures alone, but also the lower, according to that which each of them has received in itself from God—each one raises its voice in testimony to that which God is. She sees that each one<sup>3</sup> after its manner exalts God, since it has God in itself according to its capacity;<sup>4</sup> and thus all these voices make one voice of music, extolling the greatness of God and His marvellous knowledge and wisdom. And it is this that the Holy Spirit signifies in the Book of Wisdom, where He says: *Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum, et hoc quod continet omnia, scientiam habet vocis.*<sup>5</sup> Which is to say: The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the round world, and this world, which containeth all things that He hath made, hath knowledge of the voice. This is that sounding solitude which, as we say, the soul knows here, which is the testimony that all things give in themselves concerning God. And inasmuch as the soul receives this sounding music, not without solitude and withdrawal from all outward things, she calls them the silent music and the sounding solitude. This, she says, is her Beloved. And He is further

### The supper that recreates and enkindles love.

28. To those that are loved<sup>6</sup> suppers bring recreation, satisfaction

<sup>1</sup> Thus B, Bz, Ej, G. Jaén, A, Av, Bg, S read: 'the spiritual sense.'

<sup>2</sup> [See p. 78, §11, above.]

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: '... each one raises its voice as to that which God is. And in testimony hereof each one,' etc.

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg add: 'and virtue.'

<sup>5</sup> Wisdom i, 7.

<sup>6</sup> S: 'that are in love.'

and love. And because these three things are caused by the Beloved in the soul in this sweet communication, the Bride here calls Him the supper that recreates and enkindles love. It is to be known that in Divine Scripture this word 'supper' is understood of the Divine vision; for, as supper is the end of the day's work and the beginning of the night's rest, so this knowledge which we have called tranquil gives to the soul a realization of the sure termination of things evil and the possession<sup>1</sup> of things that are good, whereat it is more enkindled with love for God than it was before. Wherefore God is to the soul the supper which recreates it by being the termination of its evils, and enkindles it in love by being to it the possession<sup>2</sup> of all things that are good.

29. But in order that it may be the better understood of what kind is this supper of the soul—the which supper, as we have said, is her Beloved—it is fitting here to observe that which the same Beloved, the Spouse, says in the Apocalypse, namely: 'I stand at the door and knock; if any man open to Me, I will come in, and will sup with him and he with Me.'<sup>3</sup> Whereby He indicates that He brings with Him the supper, which is naught else than His own sweetness and the delights whereof He Himself has fruition; which, when He unites Himself with the soul, He communicates to her, so that she has fruition thereof likewise; for this is what is meant by: 'I will sup with him and he with Me.' And thus in these words is described the effect of the Divine union of the soul with God, in the which union God shares with the Bride-Soul the same good things which are proper to Him, for, as we have said, He communicates them to her, graciously and bounteously. And thus He is Himself for her the supper which recreates and enkindles love, for by His bounteousness to her He recreates it and by His graciousness to her He enkindles it within her.

30. Before we enter into the exposition of the other stanzas it is meet to observe here that, although we have said that the soul in this estate of betrothal enjoys all tranquillity, and that all the other things that are possible in this life are communicated to her, it is not for that reason to be understood that the tranquillity is only according to the higher part,<sup>4</sup> because the sensual part never, until the estate of the

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'position.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'the beginning of possession.'

<sup>3</sup> Apocalypse iii, 20. Sg omits the following sentence.

<sup>4</sup> S: 'all the other things that it is possible to communicate in this life are communicated to her, it is not for that reason to be understood that it is in her whole being, but that this tranquillity is according to the higher part.' The Toledo edition follows this reading [which it seems to me almost obligatory to follow on grounds of sense].

Spiritual Marriage, completely loses its imperfections, neither is its strength completely subdued, as will be said hereafter. That which is here communicated to it is the most that is possible in the estate of the Betrothal; for in the Spiritual Marriage its profit is much greater. In the Betrothal, although in the visits of the Spouse the Bride-Soul enjoys these great blessings which we have described, she nevertheless suffers from His absences, and from perturbations and disturbances coming from her lower part and from the devil, all of which things cease<sup>1</sup> in the estate of the Marriage.

#### ANNOTATION OF THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**T**HE virtues of the Bride having now reached the point of perfection in her soul, so that she is enjoying habitual peace in the visits which the Beloved pays her, she has at times a fruition of their sweetness and fragrance which is most sublime, because the Beloved has touched them, even as one enjoys the sweetness and beauty of lilies and other flowers when they are open and one handles them. In many of these visits the soul becomes conscious within her spirit of all her virtues<sup>2</sup>, by reason of the light which He has given her; and then with the wondrous delight and sweetness of love she gathers them all together and offers them to the Beloved, as it were a bunch<sup>3</sup> of beautiful flowers. Then the Beloved, when He accepts them (for He does indeed accept them), accepts therein a great service. All this comes to pass within the soul, at which time she feels the Beloved to be within her as upon His own bed, for the soul offers herself, together with the virtues, which is the greatest service that she can render Him; and this delight that the soul receives from this kind of gift which she makes to the Beloved is one of the greatest delights that she is wont to receive in her interior intercourse with God.

2. And the devil, becoming aware of this prosperity of the soul (for in his great malice he envies all the good that he sees in her), makes use of all his skill at this time and exercises all his arts so that he may be able to distract the soul from even the least part of this blessing; for he sets greater store upon keeping back from the soul a fraction of this her wealth and glorious delight than upon causing many other souls to fall into many other sins and very grave ones; for those other souls have little or naught to lose, whereas this soul has much, that which it

<sup>1</sup> A: 'all of which things she uses.'

<sup>2</sup> S adds here: 'which God has given her.'

<sup>3</sup> [*piña*. See p. 123, n. 4, above.]

has gained being very great and exceeding precious, just as the loss of the smallest quantity of finest gold is worse than that of a great quantity of base metals. Here the devil profits by the desires of the senses, although as a rule he can do very little, or nothing, in this estate, since they are already mortified; and, since he is powerless in this respect, he presents many distractions<sup>1</sup> to the imagination. And sometimes he stirs up many motions in the sensual part of the soul, as will afterwards be said, and causes other vexations, both spiritual and sensual, from which it is not in the power of the soul to free herself until the Lord sends His angel (as is said in the Psalm) round about them that fear Him, and delivers them,<sup>2</sup> and makes peace and tranquillity alike in the sensual part of the soul and in the spiritual part. This soul, in order to make this manifest and to entreat this favour, being fearful, from the experience which she has of the wiles used by the devil to work the aforementioned harm in her at this time, addresses the angels, whose office is to show her favour at this time<sup>3</sup> by putting the evil spirits to flight, and speaks as in the following stanza:

## STANZA XVI

**Drive us away the foxes, For<sup>4</sup> our vineyard is now in flower,<sup>5</sup>  
While we make a bunch<sup>6</sup> of roses, And let none appear upon  
the hill.**

## EXPOSITION

3. The soul, then, desiring that naught may keep from her the continuance of this interior delight of love, which is the flowering of the vineyard of her soul<sup>7</sup>—neither the envious and malicious evil spirits, nor the raging desires of sensuality, nor the various comings and goings of imaginations,<sup>8</sup> nor any other awareness of things and their presence—invokes the angels, adjuring them to drive away all these things,<sup>9</sup> and to keep them back, lest they themselves keep back the soul from the exercise of interior love, in the delight and savour whereof

<sup>1</sup> Bg: 'vanities.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xxxiii, 8. [A.V., xxxiv, 7.]

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'favour in this necessity'; B, Bg: 'favour on these occasions.'

<sup>4</sup> Sg: 'Because.'

<sup>5</sup> B, Bg, Ej, G, Sg: 'flowering.'

<sup>6</sup> [On the word translated 'bunch,' 'nosegay,' see p. 123, n. 4, above.]

<sup>7</sup> [sic.]

<sup>8</sup> S: 'of the imagination.'

<sup>9</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'all these foxes.'

the virtues and graces are being communicated and enjoyed by the soul and the Son of God. And thus she says:

**Drive us away the foxes, For<sup>1</sup> our vineyard is now in flower,<sup>2</sup>**

4. The vineyard here spoken of is the nursery of all the virtues which is in this holy soul, the which virtues give it a wine of sweet savour. This vineyard of the soul is flowering thus when the soul is united with the Spouse according to the will and in the same Spouse is rejoicing according to all these virtues together. At certain times, as we have said, there are wont to resort to the memory and fancy many and various<sup>3</sup> forms of imagination, and in the sensual part of the soul there rise up many and various<sup>4</sup> motions and desires. These are of so many and such various kinds that, when David was drinking this delectable wine of the spirit with great thirst for God, feeling the hindrance and vexation which they caused him, he said: 'My soul thirsted for Thee, in how many ways has my flesh thirsted for Thee!'<sup>5</sup>

5. All this chorus<sup>6</sup> of desires and motions of the senses the soul here calls foxes, because of the great similarity which at this time they have to them. For, even as the foxes feign sleep that they may capture their prey when they go hunting,<sup>7</sup> so all these desires and powers of the senses are at rest and asleep until these flowers of the virtues spring up in the soul and open and burst forth; and then it seems that, in its sensual part, its flowers, of the desires and powers of the senses, awaken and spring up in their attempt to resist the spirit and to reign. Even to this point comes the lust which, as Saint Paul says, the flesh has against the spirit;<sup>8</sup> for, its inclination towards the senses being strong, that which is wholly carnal finds weariness and distaste when it tastes of the spirit; wherein these desires cause great vexation to the sweetness of the spirit; wherefore the Bride says: 'Drive us away the foxes.'

6. But the malicious evil spirits for their part trouble the soul here in two ways. For they excite and stir up these desires with vehemence,<sup>9</sup> and with them, and with other imaginations, etc., they make war upon this flourishing<sup>10</sup> and peaceful kingdom of the soul. And in the second

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'Because.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, Ej, Sg: 'is now flowering.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'and very various.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'and very various.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxi, 2. [A.V., lxiii, 1.] [The second 'thirsted' is omitted in Spanish, which follows the Vulgate: *Sitivit in te anima mea; quam multipliciter tibi caro mea!*] Av has: 'in how many ways does my flesh desire Thee!' Ej, G add the Latin text.

<sup>6</sup> [Lit., 'harmony.']

<sup>7</sup> S: 'when the game comes out.' [The two expressions are very similar in Spanish, *caza* meaning either 'hunting' or 'game.']

<sup>8</sup> Galatians v, 17.

<sup>9</sup> A, Ej, G, Sg: 'with great vehemence.'

<sup>10</sup> [The Spanish word is *florido*, translated 'flowering' in the text and notes above.]

place (and this is worse) when they cannot act in this way they assail the soul with bodily noises and torments in order to cause it distraction. And, what is worse, they do battle against it with spiritual horrors and fears, amounting at times to terrible torment; which they can do very effectively at this time, if they are given permission, for, when the soul becomes very greatly detached in spirit in order to perform this spiritual exercise, the devil can readily appear to it, since he is a spirit likewise. At other times he makes other assaults upon the soul by means of horrors before it begins to enjoy these sweet flowers, when God is beginning to draw it forth to some extent from the house of its senses so that it may enter upon the said inward exercise in the garden of the Spouse; for he knows that, if once the soul enters into this recollection, it is so well protected that, do what he may, he cannot harm it. And often, when the devil goes out to intercept the soul, it will very quickly become recollected in the deep hiding-place of its inmost being, and then those terrors<sup>1</sup> which it suffers are so far away and so greatly removed that not only do they cause it no fear, but they make it to be glad and to rejoice.

7. Of these terrors the Bride made mention in the Songs, saying: 'My soul troubled me by reason of the chariots of Aminadab.'<sup>2</sup> By Aminadab she there means the devil, and she calls his assaults and attacks upon the soul 'chariots,' because of the great vehemence and the confusion and noise that accompany them. Afterwards the soul says here:<sup>3</sup> 'Drive us away the foxes.' This the Bride also entreats in the Songs, to the same purpose, saying: 'Drive us away the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyard hath flourished.'<sup>4</sup> And she says not: 'Drive me away,' but, 'Drive us away,'<sup>5</sup> for she is speaking of herself and of the Beloved, since they are at one and are enjoying the flower of the vineyard. The reason for which she says here that the vineyard is in flower, and not in fruit, is that the fruition of the virtues in the soul in this life, although it be in such perfection as in this soul of whom we speak, is, as it were, of flower; only in the next life will it be as of fruit. And she says next:

**While we make a bunch of roses,**

8. For at this season, when the soul is enjoying the flower of this

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'torments.'

<sup>2</sup> Canticles vi, 11. [A.V., vi, 12.]

<sup>3</sup> S: 'And the soul says, even as here.'

<sup>4</sup> Canticles ii, 15. Sg has *ha fallecido* ('has failed,' 'has died') for *ha florecido* ('hath flourished').

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G: 'but says it in the plural.'

vineyard and taking her delight upon the breast of her Beloved, it comes to pass that the virtues of the soul stand out clearly to view, as we have said, and are at their best, revealing themselves to her and bestowing upon her great sweetness and delight. These virtues the soul feels to be in herself and in God, so that they seem to her to be a pleasant vineyard, full of flower, belonging to them both, wherein both of them pasture and have their delight. Then the soul gathers together all these virtues, and in each one of them and in all of them together makes most delectable acts of love; all these she offers to the Beloved with great tenderness of love and sweetness; and the Beloved Himself aids her herein, for without His favour and aid she could not thus gather together and offer the virtues to her Beloved. Wherefore she says: 'We make a nosegay'—that is to say, the Beloved and I.

9.<sup>1</sup> She calls this gathering together of virtues a cone or nosegay,<sup>2</sup> because even as a pine-cone is strong, and contains within itself many pieces, strong and strongly bound together,<sup>3</sup> which are the pine-kernels, even so this cone or nosegay of virtues which the soul makes for her Beloved is one single piece of the soul's perfection, which firmly and in an ordered manner<sup>4</sup> embraces and contains within itself many perfections and virtues which are very strong, and gifts which are very precious, for all the perfections and virtues are ordered<sup>5</sup> and contained in one firm perfection of the soul. Inasmuch as this perfection is being formed through the practice of the virtues, and, when formed, is being offered to the Beloved by the soul<sup>6</sup> in the spirit of love after the manner which we are describing, it is fitting, then, that the foxes aforementioned be driven away so that they hinder not the said interior communication between the two. And not only does the soul in this stanza make this request alone that she may be able to fashion the nosegay well, but likewise she desires<sup>7</sup> that which ensues in the line following, namely:

**And let none appear upon the hill.<sup>8</sup>**

10. This Divine interior exercise also requires withdrawal and detachment from all things that might present themselves to the soul,

<sup>1</sup> [This paragraph and the preceding are both numbered '8' by P. Silverio, and paragraphs 10 and 11 are numbered by him 9 and 10.]

<sup>2</sup> [See p. 123, n. 4, above.]

<sup>3</sup> S adds: 'among themselves.'

<sup>4</sup> A, Ej, G, Sg have: *ordinariamente* ['habitually'] for *ordenadamente* ['in an ordered manner'].

<sup>5</sup> Av omits several lines here [destroying the sense].

<sup>6</sup> Jaén reads: 'to the Beloved by the Beloved'—an evident error.

<sup>7</sup> Av: 'desires to do.'

<sup>8</sup> Av, Bz: 'upon the countryside.'

whether from the lower part of a man, which is that of the senses, or<sup>1</sup> from the higher part, which is that of the reason, in the which two parts are comprised the entire harmony of the faculties and senses of a man, which harmony the Bride here calls a hill, because all the knowledge and the desires of nature dwell and are situated thereon, as quarry on the hill, and the devil is wont to pursue and capture these desires and this knowledge to the detriment of the soul. She begs that none may appear on this hill—that is to say, that no representation and form of any object that pertains<sup>2</sup> to any of these faculties or senses whereof we have spoken may appear before the soul and the Spouse. It is thus as though she were to say: In all the spiritual faculties of the soul—namely the understanding, the memory and the will—let there be no other knowledge or private affections or considerations of any kind; and in all the senses and faculties of the body, both inward and outward, such as the imagination, the fancy, etc., and seeing, hearing, etc., let there be no other digressions and forms,<sup>3</sup> and images and figures, neither representations of objects to the soul, nor other natural operations.

11. This the soul says here since, in order to have perfect fruition of this communication with God, it is fitting that all the senses and faculties, whether interior or exterior, be empty, idle and at rest from their own operations and objects; for, at such a time, the more they exercise themselves of their own accord, the more they disturb the soul. For, when the soul attains to some manner of interior union of love, the spiritual faculties no longer work in it, still less do the bodily faculties, inasmuch as the work of the union of love is already wrought and done, and the soul is moved in love, and thus the faculties have ceased to work, for when they reach their goal all medial operations come to an end. Thus that which the soul does at this time is to wait lovingly upon God, which is to love in continuation of unitive love. Let none, then, appear upon the hill; let the will alone appear, waiting upon the Beloved in the surrender of itself and of all the virtues after the manner which has been described.

<sup>1</sup> Av omits: 'from the lower . . . senses or.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, Sg: 'that is pertinent'; G: 'that is impertinent.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B, Bg modify thus: '. . . and faculties of the body, such as the imagination, fancy, etc.; seeing and hearing, both inward and outward, let there be no other digressions and forms.'

## ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

FOR a further knowledge of the stanza which follows, it is meet here to observe that the absences of her Beloved which the soul suffers in this estate of spiritual betrothal are very afflicting,<sup>1</sup> and some are of such a kind that there is no grief to be compared with them. The cause of this is that, since the love which the soul has to God in this estate is great and vehement, she is greatly and vehemently tormented in His absence. And to this grief is added the vexation<sup>2</sup> which comes to the soul at this time from any kind of intercourse or communication with the creatures, which is very great. For, as she is experiencing the great vehemence of her fathomless desire for union with God, any kind of intercourse is most grievous and vexatious to her; just as, when a stone with great impetus and velocity goes rushing towards its centre, anything which it might meet and which detained it in that void would cause it a most violent shock.<sup>3</sup> And, as the soul has already experienced the taste of these sweet visits, they are more desirable to her than gold and all beauty.<sup>4</sup> Wherefore the soul, greatly fearing to be deprived of so precious a presence, even for a moment, addresses herself to aridity,<sup>5</sup> and to the spirit of her Spouse, saying in this stanza:<sup>6</sup>

## STANZA XVII

**Stay thee, dead north wind. Come, south wind, that awakenest love;  
Breathe through my garden and let its odours<sup>7</sup> flow, And the Beloved shall pasture<sup>8</sup> among the flowers.**

## EXPOSITION

2. In addition to that which we have said in the last stanza, spiritual dryness is a cause whereby is kept from the soul the substance<sup>9</sup> of inward sweetness whereof we have spoken<sup>10</sup> above; and the soul, fear-

<sup>1</sup> B, Bg, Ej, Sg have *afectivas* ('affective') for *aflictivas* ('afflicting').

<sup>2</sup> Bg: 'the absence.'

<sup>3</sup> B, Bg: 'will be very vexatious to it.'

<sup>4</sup> A: 'and all other beauties.'

<sup>5</sup> [*sequedad*: translated 'dryness' in the following paragraphs.]

<sup>6</sup> S: 'says the words of the following stanza.'

<sup>7</sup> [P. Silverio here takes the reading of p. 181, n. 7, above.]

<sup>8</sup> A: 'shall appear.' [*parecerá* for *pacerá*.]

<sup>9</sup> [*jugo*, the sap or pith of a plant.]

<sup>10</sup> S: 'have treated.'

ing this, does two things in this stanza. First, she keeps out dryness, shutting the door upon it by means of continual prayer and devotion. The second thing that she does is to invoke the Holy Spirit, for it is He that has to drive out this dryness from the soul, that sustains and increases her love for the Spouse, and that will lead<sup>1</sup> the soul to the interior practice of the virtues—all this to the end that the Son of God, her Spouse, may have greater rejoicing and delight in her, for her whole aim<sup>2</sup> is to please the Beloved.

**Stay thee, dead north wind.**

3. The north wind is a very cold wind<sup>3</sup> which dries up and withers the flowers and plants, or at least makes them to shrink and close up<sup>4</sup> when it strikes them. And because spiritual dryness and the realization of the Beloved's absence<sup>5</sup> cause this same effect in the soul which experiences them, quenching in her<sup>6</sup> the substance and savour and fragrance of the virtues which she tasted, she calls it the north wind; because all the virtues and the affective exercises which the soul practised are mortified in her, wherefore the soul says: 'Stay thee, dead north wind.' This saying of the soul is to be understood of an act and deed of prayer, and of spiritual exercises,<sup>7</sup> which shall stay this dryness. But, because in this estate the things that God communicates to the soul are so intimate that by no exercise of her faculties can the soul of herself put them into practice and experience them if the Spirit of the Spouse cause not this motion of love within her, she next invokes Him, saying:

**Come, south wind, that awakenest love;**

4. The south wind is another wind, which is commonly called *álbrego*;<sup>8</sup> this peaceful breeze causes rain and makes grass and plants to grow and flowers to open and scatter their fragrance; its effects are contrary to those of the north wind.<sup>9</sup> And thus by this breeze the soul denotes the Holy Spirit, Who, as she says, awakens love; for, when this Divine breeze assails the soul, it enkindles it wholly and refreshes it and revives it and awakens the will and upraises<sup>10</sup> the desires which

<sup>1</sup> [The Spanish text changes abruptly here from indicative to subjunctive in a way that cannot be exactly expressed in English.]

<sup>2</sup> Sg: 'her whole perfection.'

<sup>3</sup> A: 'is a dry and cold wind.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'and dry up.'

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'and the affective absence of the Beloved.']

<sup>6</sup> S: 'exhausting in her.'

<sup>7</sup> S omits: 'prayer, and of.'

<sup>8</sup> [See p. 128, n. 1, above.]

<sup>9</sup> S modifies: 'and scatter their fragrance; and in fact this breeze has the contrary effects to those of the north wind.'

<sup>10</sup> Sg: 'and awakens.'

aforetime had fallen and were asleep, to the love of God, in such manner that it may well be said thereof that it awakens the love both of the Spouse and of the Bride; and that which she begs of the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup> is that which she says in the line following:

### **Breathe through my garden**

5. This garden is the soul; for, just as the soul called herself above a vineyard in flower, because the flower of the virtues which are in her gives her a wine of sweet savour, so here she calls herself a garden,<sup>2</sup> because there are planted within her, and are born and grow, the flowers of perfections and virtues whereof we have spoken. And here it is to be noted that the Bride says not 'Breathe in my garden,' but 'Breathe through my garden,' for there is a great difference between the breathing of God into the soul and His breathing through the soul.<sup>3</sup> To breathe into the soul is to infuse into it grace, gifts and virtues; and to breathe through the soul is for God to touch and set in motion the virtues and perfections which have already been given to it, refreshing them and moving them so that they may diffuse into the soul wondrous fragrance and sweetness. This is just as when aromatic spices are shaken; for, as soon as they are set in motion, they shed the abundance of their odour, which formerly was not present or was not perceived to so high a degree. For the virtues that the soul has in itself, whether acquired or infused, it is not always actually feeling and enjoying; because, as we shall say later, they are present in the soul during this life like flowers enclosed in the bud,<sup>4</sup> or like aromatic spices covered over, the fragrance whereof is not perceived until they are opened and shaken, as we have said.<sup>5</sup>

6. But at times God grants to the Bride-Soul such favours that, breathing with His Divine Spirit through this her flowering garden, He opens all these buds, or virtues, and uncovers these aromatic spices which are the gifts and perfections and riches of the soul, and, by manifesting this inward wealth and treasure, reveals all her beauty. And then it is a wondrous thing to see, and sweet to feel, the riches of the gifts which are revealed to the soul and the beauty of these flowers of the virtues which are now all opened in the soul; and the sweetness of

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G: 'of the Spouse.'

<sup>2</sup> A omits the next four lines, continuing: 'for there is . . .'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'the breathing of God into the soul or through the soul'; Ej, Sg: '. . . into the soul and the breathing of God through the soul.'

<sup>4</sup> S: 'in the shoot or in the bud.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G omit the following paragraph.

the fragrance which each one diffuses, according to its nature, is inestimable. This the Bride here calls the flowing of the odours of the garden, and she says in the line following:

**And let its odours flow,**

7. These odours are at times so abundant that the soul thinks herself to be clothed with delights and bathed in inestimable glory—so much so that not only is she conscious of them within, but they are also wont to overflow from her, without, to such an extent that all who are able to discern such things recognize it,<sup>1</sup> and the soul in this case seems to them to be like a delectable garden, full of the delights and riches of God. And not only when these flowers are opened can this be observed in these holy souls, but they bear within them habitually something of greatness and dignity which causes others to stop and respect them by reason of the supernatural effect produced in them through their close and familiar intercourse with God, even as it is written of Moses, in the Book of Exodus,<sup>2</sup> that they could not look upon his countenance by reason of the honour and glory which remained upon it<sup>3</sup> because he had spoken with God face to face.

8. In this breathing of the Holy Spirit through the soul, which is His visitation of her in love,<sup>4</sup> the Spouse, Who is the Son of God, communicates Himself to her after a lofty manner. To this end He first sends His Spirit, Who is His forerunner, as He did to the Apostles, to prepare for Him a dwelling for the soul His Bride, raising her up in delight, setting her garden in order, causing its flowers to open, revealing its gifts, adorning her with the tapestry of His graces<sup>5</sup> and riches. And thus with great desire the Bride-Soul desires all this—namely, that the north wind may depart, that the south wind may come and that it may breathe through the garden, for herein<sup>6</sup> the soul gains many things together. She gains the fruition of the virtues which have been brought to the highest point of delectable exercise, as we have said. She gains the fruition of the Beloved in them, since by their means, as we have just said, He communicates Himself within her in more intimate love, granting her more special favours than before. She also gains this, that the Beloved delights in her far more through this actual exercise of the virtues, and it is this that pleases her most, namely that

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'feel and recognize it.'

<sup>2</sup> Exodus xxxiv, 30.

<sup>3</sup> So Jaén. The other MSS. read: 'upon his person.'

<sup>4</sup> S: '... His visitation, enamoured of her.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, Sg: 'with His tapestries and graces.' G: 'embellishing her with His tapestries and graces.'

<sup>6</sup> So all the MSS. except Jaén, which reads: 'for then.'

her Beloved is pleased with her. She also gains the continuance and duration of this fragrance and sweetness of the virtues, which continues in the soul for as long as the Spouse is present within her after this manner, and the Bride is giving Him sweetness in her virtues, even as she says in the Songs after this wise: 'While the King was in his reclining-chamber—that is to say, in the soul—my flowering and fragrant little tree gave forth fragrance of sweetness.'<sup>1</sup> By this fragrant little tree is here understood<sup>2</sup> the soul itself, which from the flowers of the virtues that it has within itself gives forth fragrance of sweetness to the Beloved, Who dwells within it in this kind of union.

9. Wherefore this Divine breath of the Holy Spirit is greatly to be desired, and likewise that every soul should pray that He may breathe through its garden so that the Divine odours of God may flow. And because this is so necessary, and of such great glory and good for the soul, the Bride desired it and prayed for it in the Songs in the same terms as here, saying: 'Rise up hence, north wind, and come, south-west wind,<sup>3</sup> and breathe through my garden; and its fragrances and precious spices shall flow.'<sup>4</sup> And all this the soul desires, not for the delight and glory which come to her thereby, but because she knows that her Spouse delights therein. This is<sup>5</sup> a preparation and prediction for the Son of God to come and take His delight in her; wherefore she says next:

### **And the Beloved shall pasture among the flowers.**

10. The soul here refers to this delight that the Son of God has in her at this time, and she gives it the name of pasture, which describes it with the greatest fitness, since pasturing or feeding<sup>6</sup> is a thing that gives not only pleasure, but likewise sustenance; and even so the Son of God delights in the soul, and in these the soul's delights, and takes sustenance from her—that is, He continues in her, as in a place wherein He has great delight, since the place itself truly delights in Him. And it is this, as I understand, that He Himself meant when He said, through the mouth of Solomon, in the Proverbs: 'My delights are with the sons of men'<sup>7</sup>—that is to say, when their delights are to be with Me, Who am the Son of God.<sup>8</sup> And it is fitting to note here that the soul says not that the Beloved will pasture 'upon' the flowers, but 'among' the flowers; for, since His communication (that is to say, that of the

<sup>1</sup> Canticles i, 11. [A.V., i, 12.]

<sup>2</sup> [*dbrego*.]

<sup>3</sup> S adds: 'all.'

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs viii, 31.

<sup>2</sup> S: 'she here gives to be understood.'

<sup>4</sup> Canticles iv, 16.

<sup>6</sup> Bg: 'since pasturing that is supplied.'

<sup>8</sup> Av omits: 'Who am the Son of God.'

Spouse) is in the soul itself, by means of the adornment of the virtues aforementioned, it follows that it is upon the soul itself that He pastures, transforming it into Himself, when it is prepared and seasoned and made fragrant with the aforementioned flowers of virtues and gifts and perfections, which are the things<sup>1</sup> whereby and among which He pastures upon the soul. These things, by the power of His forerunner aforementioned, are rendering the soul pleasing and sweet to the Son of God, to the end that by this means He may pasture the more upon her love; for this is the habit<sup>2</sup> of the Spouse, to unite Himself with the soul amid the fragrance of these flowers. This habit the Bride observes very well<sup>3</sup> in the Songs, as one who well knows it, when she speaks in these words: 'My Beloved is gone down into His garden, to the beds and breezes of the fragrant spices, to pasture in the gardens and to gather lilies.'<sup>4</sup> And again she says: 'I for my Beloved and my Beloved for me: He feedeth among the lilies.'<sup>5</sup> That is to say: He pastures upon my soul and delights in it, and it is His garden, among the lilies of my virtues and perfections and graces.

ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**I**N this estate of spiritual betrothal the soul can see her excellences and great riches, but perceives that she possesses them not and enjoys them not as she would desire, because she still has her abode in the flesh. Oftentimes, therefore, she suffers greatly, especially when her realization of this becomes more vivid.<sup>6</sup> For she is able to see that, while in the body, she is like to a great lord in prison, subject to a thousand miseries, with his kingdoms confiscated and all his dominion and wealth taken away from him; of all his possessions allowed to have nothing but food, and that very sparingly. Anyone will be well able to see how he suffers,<sup>7</sup> especially since the very domestics in his house no longer render him due obedience, but at every opportunity his servants and slaves set themselves up against him, and treat him with no respect, even to the point of trying to take the very food<sup>8</sup> from

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the sauce.']

<sup>2</sup> S: 'this is the love.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'observes well.'

<sup>4</sup> Canticles vi, 1. [A.V., vi, 2-3.] For 'beds and breezes' [which in the Spanish is singular in form, though plural in meaning] Bg has: 'to the manner and breeze,' and A: 'to the fragrance and breeze.'

<sup>5</sup> Canticles vi, 2. [A.V., vi, 3.] Ej, G, Sg read: 'among the flowers—that is to say, in my soul—and delights in it, which is His garden,' etc.

<sup>6</sup> B, Bg, by reading *acaba* for *aviva*, modify thus: 'especially when her realization of this comes to an end.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, Sg read: 'Anyone will be able to judge what this great lord of whom we have spoken will feel.'

<sup>8</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to take the morsel.']

his dish.<sup>1</sup> And when God<sup>2</sup> grants the soul the favour of giving it to taste some of<sup>3</sup> the good things and riches which He has prepared for it, immediately there rises up in its sensual part some evil servant of desire, or perchance some slave of disorderly motions, or other rebellious elements<sup>4</sup> in this its lower nature, to prevent its attaining this good.

2. Herein the soul feels as though it were in the country of enemies and as though tyrannized over among strangers, and as one dead among dead men—feeling indeed that which is expressed by the prophet Baruch, when he dwells upon this misery in describing the captivity of Jacob, saying: ‘Who is Israel,<sup>5</sup> that it should be in its enemies’ land? Thou art grown old in a strange country; thou art defiled with the dead and they have counted thee with them that go down to hell.’<sup>6</sup> And Jeremias, feeling the wretchedness of this treatment<sup>7</sup> that the soul suffers from the captivity of the body, speaking with Israel according to the spiritual sense, says: ‘Is Israel perchance a servant or a slave that he is thus taken prisoner? The lions roared upon him,’ etc.<sup>8</sup> He means here by the lions the desires and the rebellious elements, to which we are referring, of this tyrant king of sensuality. And to the end that she may describe the trouble that comes to her, and the desire which she has that this kingdom of sensuality, with all its armies<sup>9</sup> and troubles, may now come to an end or be wholly subjected to her, the soul raises her eyes to the Spouse as to Him that is to do all this, and, speaking against the said motions and rebellious elements, says as in this stanza:

### STANZA XVIII

**O nymphs of Judæa, While mid the flowers and rose-trees the  
ambar sends forth perfume,  
Dwell in the outskirts And desire not to touch our thresholds.**

#### EXPOSITION

3. In this stanza it is the Bride that speaks, who, seeing herself adorned, according to her higher and spiritual part, with such rich and excellent gifts and delights, which come from her Beloved, desires to

<sup>1</sup> Av: ‘from his mouth.’

<sup>2</sup> S: ‘Thus, then, is the soul in the body, when God, etc.’

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, ‘some morsel of.’]

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, ‘or other rebellions.’] A, Bz: ‘revelations.’

<sup>5</sup> S reads, more correctly: ‘How happeneth it, O Israel, etc.’

<sup>6</sup> Baruch iii, 10–11.

<sup>7</sup> Jeremias ii, 14–15.

<sup>8</sup> A, B, Bg: ‘feeling this same treatment.’

<sup>9</sup> Bz, Sg have ‘exercises’ (*ejercicios*) for ‘armies’ (*ejércitos*).

preserve herself in the security and continual possession thereof, which, in the two preceding stanzas, the Spouse has granted her. She sees that in her lower part—namely, sensuality—there may be impediments, as in fact there are, which disturb so great a blessing. She therefore bids the operations and motions of that her lower part to be stilled in her faculties and senses, and not to pass beyond the limits of their own region, that of the senses,<sup>1</sup> nor to trouble and harass the higher and spiritual part of the soul, lest it should be kept, by any motion, howsoever small, from the blessing and sweetness which it enjoys. For if the motions of the sensual part and its faculties take place when the spirit is in fruition, they trouble and harass it all the more when they are busier and more active. She says, then, thus:

**O nymphs of Judæa,**

4. By Judæa she means the lower part of the soul, which is that of the senses. And she calls it Judæa, because it is weak and carnal and of itself blind, even as are the Jewish people. And by nymphs she means all the imaginations, fancies and motions and affections of this lower part. All these she calls nymphs because, even as the nymphs attract lovers to themselves by<sup>2</sup> their affectionate nature and their grace, so these operations and motions of sensuality contrive to attract the will pleasantly to themselves from the rational part of the soul, in order to take it from that which is inward, and so making it to love that which is outward, which they themselves love and desire, and likewise moving the understanding and attracting it to be married and united with them after their base, sensual manner, contriving to bring into conformity and to unite<sup>3</sup> the rational part with the sensual. You sensual motions and operations, then, she says:

**While mid the flowers and rose-trees . . .**

5. The flowers, as we have said, are the virtues of the soul. The rose-trees are the faculties of the same soul:<sup>4</sup> memory, understanding and will; these bear and nurture flowers of Divine conceptions and acts of love<sup>5</sup> and of the said virtues. While, then, amid these virtues and faculties of my soul, etc.,

**. . . the ambar sends forth perfume,**

<sup>1</sup> Thus Jaén, Sg, S. Av, Bz: 'the limits of their sensual region.' A, B, Bg: 'the limits of their sensuality.' G: 'the limits of their religion, sensuality.'

<sup>2</sup> Thus Ej, G, Sg, S. Jaén, A, Av, B, Bg, Bz: 'all these she calls nymphs, who by,' etc.

<sup>3</sup> S has 'attract' for 'unite.'

<sup>4</sup> S: 'The rose trees are its faculties.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'Divine contentments and acts of love of God.'

6. By the ambar is here understood the Divine spirit of the Spouse which dwells in the soul; and for this Divine ambar to send forth perfume amid the flowers and rose-trees is for it to scatter and communicate itself most sweetly in the faculties and virtues of the soul, thereby giving the soul a perfume of Divine sweetness.<sup>1</sup> For so long, then, as this Divine spirit is giving spiritual sweetness to my soul,

### **Dwell in the outskirts**

7. In the outskirts of Judæa, which, we said, are the inferior or sensual portion of the soul. Its outskirts are the inward sensual senses, such as the memory,<sup>2</sup> the fancy, the imagination, wherein meet and gather the forms and images and phantasms of objects, by means whereof sensuality moves its desires and longings. It is these forms, etc., which are here called nymphs; and while these are quiet and at rest the desires also sleep. These nymphs enter these outskirts of the inward senses through the gates of the outward senses, which are hearing, sight, smell, etc.; so that we may term all these faculties and senses, whether inward or outward,<sup>3</sup> of this sensual part, outskirts, because they are the suburbs which are without the walls of the city. For that which is called city in the soul is that most inward part—that is to say, the rational part, which has capacity for communion with God, and the operations of which are contrary to those of sensuality. But since there is natural communication between the dwellers in these outskirts (which are the sensual part of the soul, these dwellers being the nymphs) and the higher part, which is the city,<sup>4</sup> so that that which is done in this lower part is habitually felt in the other inward part, and in consequence causes itself to be noticed and disturbs that spiritual work and presence which it has in God; therefore she tells them to dwell in her outskirts—that is, to be stilled in the outward and inward senses of her sensual part.

### **And desire not to touch our thresholds.**

8. That is, touch not the higher part<sup>5</sup> even in your first motions, for the first motions of the soul are the entrances and the thresholds to an entrance therein, and, when they pass from being first motions into the reason, they are crossing the thresholds; but, when they are naught but<sup>6</sup> first motions, they are said only to touch the thresholds or

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'perfume of sweetest odour.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg adds: 'and understanding.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'and inward and outward senses.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej abbreviates and modifies: 'in these outskirts and those that dwell in the city.'

<sup>5</sup> A: 'touch not the higher door.'

<sup>6</sup> Jaén omits the words: 'into the reason . . . first motions.'

to knock at the door, which happens when attacks upon the reason are made by sensuality with regard to some disorderly act. The Bride here not only bids these not to touch the soul; she even says that no considerations must come near which make not for the tranquillity and blessing whereof the soul has fruition.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

THE soul in this estate has become so great an enemy of the lower part and its operations that it would have God communicate to that part naught that is spiritual, when He communicates such a thing to the higher part. If He communicates aught to the lower part, it must be very little or the soul will be unable to bear it by reason of the weakness of its condition, without its natural forces failing and consequently its spirit suffering and being afflicted, in which case it will be unable to rejoice in peace. For, as the Wise Man says, the body presses down the spirit, because it is corruptible.<sup>1</sup> And as the soul desires the sublimest<sup>2</sup> and most excellent communications of God, and cannot receive these in company with its sensual part, it desires God to grant them apart therefrom. For with regard to that sublime vision of the third heaven which Saint Paul saw,<sup>3</sup> wherein he says that he saw God, he himself says that he knows not if he received it in the body or out of<sup>4</sup> the body. But after whatsoever manner it may have been it was without<sup>5</sup> the body, for if the body had had a part therein he could not have failed to know it, nor could the vision have been as sublime as he says it was, when he says that he heard words so secret that it is not lawful for a man to utter them.<sup>6</sup> Wherefore the soul, knowing full well that such great favours cannot be received in so strait a vessel, desires the Spouse to grant them outside of<sup>7</sup> it, or, at the least, without<sup>8</sup> it, and, speaking to the Spouse Himself, entreats Him thus in this stanza.

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom ix, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Jaén has 'the sublime'; A: 'desires the holy souls.' All the other authorities read as in the text.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 2.

<sup>4</sup> [*fuera de*: outside—i.e. the soul is in a state of ecstasy.]

<sup>5</sup> [*sin*: independent of—the body has no share in the Divine communications.]

<sup>6</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 4.

<sup>7</sup> [*fuera de*.]

<sup>8</sup> [*sin*.]

## STANZA XIX

**Hide thyself, dearest one, And look with thy face upon the mountains,  
And desire not to speak, But look upon her companions who travels mid strange islands.**

## EXPOSITION

2. Four things begs the Bride-Soul of the Spouse in this stanza. The first, that He will be pleased to have communion with her most inwardly in the hidden part of her soul. The second, that He will illumine and inform her faculties with the glory and excellence of His Divinity. The third, that He will deal with her so sublimely and profoundly that none may be able or may wish to describe it, and that the outward and sensual part of her soul may be unable to apprehend it. And the fourth, that He will fall in love with the many virtues and graces that He<sup>1</sup> has placed in her, in company whereof she is going and soaring aloft to God through high and noble knowledge of the Divinity, and through excesses of love most strange and singular, surpassing such as she habitually experiences.

**Hide thyself, dearest one,**

3. As though she were to say: Dear Spouse of mine, withdraw Thee into<sup>2</sup> the inmost part of my soul, communicating Thyself to it after a secret fashion, and manifesting to it Thy hidden wonders,<sup>3</sup> which are far removed from all mortal eyes.<sup>4</sup>

**And look with thy face upon the mountains,**

4. The face of God is His Divinity and the mountains are the faculties of the soul—memory, understanding and will. Thus it is as though she were to say: Assail my understanding with Thy Divinity, giving it Divine intelligence; and my will, giving and communicating to it Divine love; and my memory, with Divine possession of glory. Herein the soul prays Him for all that for which she may pray, since she is not

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'with her many virtues, that He,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> S: 'Hide Thyself in.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'Thy secret places and wonders.'

<sup>4</sup> In the margin of Sg, P. Manuel de Santa María wrote (in the eighteenth century): 'Here are missing two folios.'

now being content with knowledge and communication of God from behind, such as God granted to Moses—that is, with a knowledge of Him by His effects and works;<sup>1</sup> but she desires to see the face of God, which is essential communication<sup>2</sup> of His Divinity, without any kind of intermediary in the soul, through certain contact<sup>3</sup> thereof with the Divinity. This is a thing far removed from all sense and accidents, inasmuch as it is the touch of pure substances—that is, of the soul and the Divinity. Wherefore she says next:

**And desire not to speak,**

5. That is to say: And desire not to speak as Thou didst aforetime, when the communications that Thou workedst in me were such that Thou didst utter them to the outward senses, since they concerned things whereof these were capable, and were not so sublime and profound that the senses could not attain to them. But now let these communications be so sublime and substantial, and so intimate, that naught may be said of them to the outward senses—that is, that these may be unable to attain to a knowledge thereof; for substance of the spirit cannot be communicated to sense, and whatsoever is communicated to sense, especially in this life, cannot be pure spirit, for sense is incapable thereof. The soul, then, desiring here this communication of God, which is so substantial and essential as not to be apprehended by sense, prays the Spouse not to speak thereof, which is as much as to say: Let the depth of this hiding-place of spiritual union be of such a kind that sense may not succeed either in speaking of it or in feeling it; may it be like the secrets which Saint Paul heard, whereof it was not lawful for man to speak.<sup>4</sup>

**But look upon her companions**

6. For God to look is for Him to love and to grant favours;<sup>5</sup> and the companions upon whom the soul here begs God to look are the multitude of virtues and gifts and perfections and other spiritual riches which He has set within her, like pledges, tokens and jewels of an affianced bride. And thus it is as though she were to say: But first

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 22–23.

<sup>2</sup> Ej: 'essential knowledge.' G: 'especial knowledge.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'certain knowledge.' Av has here a folio missing.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Jaén has: 'to look and to grant favours.' [P. Silverio considers this a slip, but it seems to me quite an intelligible variant.]

turn Thou, Beloved, to my inmost soul, and fall in love with the company of riches which Thou hast set therein; so that, having come to love my soul through them, Thou mayest hide Thyself in her and remain in her;<sup>1</sup> for in truth, although they be Thine, yet, since Thou hast given them to her, they are hers likewise.

### Who travels mid strange islands.

7. That is to say, they belong to my soul, which travels to Thee through strange knowledge of Thee and by ways and in manners that are strange, and far removed from all the senses, and from common natural knowledge. This is as though she were to say, desiring to constrain Him: Since my soul travels to Thee through strange and spiritual knowledge that is far removed from the senses, do Thou communicate Thyself to her likewise to so inward and sublime a degree that Thy communication may be far removed from them all.

### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZAS<sup>2</sup> FOLLOWING

**I**N order to reach so lofty an estate of perfection as that to which the soul here aspires, which is the Spiritual Marriage, it suffices her not<sup>3</sup> to be clean and purified from all the imperfections and rebellious ways and imperfect habits of the lower part, wherein, the old man being stripped off, she is subjected and surrendered to the higher part; but she needs also to have great strength and a love most sublime for so firm and so close<sup>4</sup> an embrace of God. For not only does the soul in this estate attain to a very high degree of purity and beauty, but she likewise acquires a terrible strength, by reason of the close and firm knot that is made by means of this union between God and the soul.

2. Wherefore, in order to come to this estate, the soul has need to have reached a point of purity, strength and sufficient love; for which reason the Holy Spirit (Who it is that intervenes and brings about this spiritual union), desiring that the soul should attain to the possession of these qualities in order to merit it, speaking with the Father and the Son in the Songs, said: 'What shall we do for our sister in the day

<sup>1</sup> S: 'having fallen in love with them, Thou mayest hide Thyself in her and remain in her.'

<sup>2</sup> So S, for there are actually two stanzas. Jaén reads: 'the stanza.'

<sup>3</sup> The majority of the MSS. wrongly omit 'not.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G: 'so strange,' 'so rare.'

when she shall come out to the presence of her lover<sup>1</sup> and to speak? For she is very little and her breasts have not grown. If she be a wall, let us build upon it bulwarks and defences of silver; and, if she be a door, let us join it together with boards of cedar.<sup>2</sup> Here, by the bulwarks and defences of silver are meant the strong and heroic virtues, contained in faith, which is signified by the silver; the which heroic virtues are those of the Spiritual Marriage, which are builded upon the soul that is strong, here signified by the wall, upon the strength whereof the peaceful Spouse will repose undisturbed by any weakness. And by the boards of cedar are meant the affections and accidents of sublime love, the which sublime love is signified by the cedar-tree; and this is the love of the Spiritual Marriage. And, that the Bride may be joined together with these boards, it is needful that she be a door—in order, that is to say, that the Spouse may enter, she holding open for Him the door of the will with the true and complete consent of love, which is the consent of the betrothal that is given before the Spiritual Marriage. And, further, by the breasts of the Bride is meant that same perfect love that it befits her to have in order that she may appear before Christ the Spouse, and her estate be consummated.

3. But the text quoted above says that, desiring as she did to go out to His presence,<sup>3</sup> the Bride answered, saying: 'I am a wall, and my breasts are as a tower.'<sup>4</sup> Which is to say: My soul is strong and my love most sublime—so that He may not for that reason draw back. This the Bride-Soul, moved by the desire that she has for this perfect union and transformation, has likewise been explaining in the preceding stanzas, especially in that which we have just expounded, wherein she sets before the Spouse the virtues and rich dispositions<sup>5</sup> which she has received from Him, in order to constrain Him the more. And therefore the Spouse, desiring to make an end of this matter, replies in the two following stanzas, wherein He completes the purification of the soul, and makes it strong, and prepares it for this estate according to the sensual part as well as according to the spiritual, speaking in these stanzas against all contrarieties and rebellions, as well of the sensual part as of the part of the devil.

<sup>1</sup> [*salir a vistas*. On the mystics' allegorical use of this phrase, see *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, Vol. I, pp. 183-4: 2nd ed., I, 147.]

<sup>2</sup> Canticles viii, 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> [*salir a estas vistas*. See n. 1, above. The translation repeats the phrase used above.]

<sup>4</sup> Canticles viii, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Bz, Ej, G, S: 'virtues, riches and dispositions.'

## STANZAS XX AND XXI

**Birds of swift wing, Lions, harts, leaping does,  
Mountains, valleys, banks, waters, breezes, heats, And terrors  
that keep watch by night.**

**By the pleasant lyres And by the sirens' song, I conjure you,  
Cease your wrath<sup>1</sup> and touch not the wall, That the Bride may  
sleep more securely.**

## EXPOSITION

4. In these two stanzas the Spouse, the Son of God, sets the Bride-Soul in possession of peace and tranquillity, in the conformity of the lower part of her nature with the higher, cleansing her of all her imperfections and bringing into control<sup>2</sup> the natural reasoning powers and faculties of the soul, according as is said in these two stanzas, the sense whereof is as follows. First,<sup>3</sup> the Spouse conjures and commands the useless digressions of the fancy and the imagination from henceforth to cease; and furthermore, He brings into control the two natural faculties, which formerly to some extent afflicted the soul, the irascible and the concupiscible; and, in so far as may be in this life, He brings to the perfection of their objects the three faculties of the soul—memory, understanding and will. Besides this, He conjures and commands the four passions of the soul—namely: joy, hope, grief and fear—which from henceforth are mitigated and brought into control. All these things are signified by all those names which are set down in the first stanza, whose troublesome operations and motions the Spouse causes to cease in the soul by means of the great sweetness and delight and fortitude which she receives in the spiritual communication and surrender of Himself which God grants her at this time. Wherein, since God quickly transforms the soul into Himself, all the faculties, desires and motions of the soul lose their natural imperfection and become Divine. And thus the stanza says:

**Birds of swift wing,**

5. He calls the digressions of the imagination birds of swift wing, since they are light and subtle in their flight first in one direction and

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. p. 182, n. 4, above.]

<sup>3</sup> Sg recommences here.

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G: 'into perfection.'

then in another. When the will, in quietness, is enjoying the delectable communication of the Beloved, they are apt to cause it displeasure, and, by their subtle flights, to quench its joy. These the Beloved says that He conjures by the pleasant lyres, etc. That is to say that, since the sweetness and delight of the soul<sup>1</sup> are now so abundant and frequent that they will be unable to hinder it as they were wont to do aforetime when it had not reached so high an estate, they are to cease their restless flights, their impetuosities and their excesses. This is to be understood after the same manner in the other parts of this stanza which we have here to expound, as for example:

**Lions, harts, leaping does,**

6. By the lions He means the acrimonies and impetuosities of the irascible faculty, which faculty is as bold<sup>2</sup> and daring in its acts as are lions. And by the harts and the leaping does is understood the other faculty of the soul, which is the concupiscible<sup>3</sup>—that is, the power of the desire,<sup>4</sup> which has two effects: the one of cowardice<sup>5</sup> and the other of boldness. It produces the effects of cowardice<sup>6</sup> when it finds that things are inconvenient to itself, for at such times it withdraws and retires within itself and behaves timidly, and in these effects it is compared to the hart; for even as harts possess this concupiscible<sup>7</sup> faculty to a higher degree than many other animals, so, too, they are very timid and retiring. The effects of boldness<sup>8</sup> it produces when it finds that things are convenient to itself, for then it retires not any more, neither behaves timidly, but comes forth boldly to desire<sup>9</sup> them and accept them with its desires and affections. And as concerns these affections of boldness this faculty is compared to the does, which have such concupiscence toward that which they desire that not only do they run towards it, but they even leap after it, for which reason they are here called 'leaping.'<sup>10</sup>

7. So that, in conjuring the lions, the Spouse restrains the impetuosities<sup>11</sup> and excesses of wrath; and in conjuring the harts, He strengthens<sup>12</sup> the concupiscible faculty with respect to the cowardice and feebleness of mind which aforetime caused it to shrink; and in

<sup>1</sup> Bz, S: 'the sweetness of delight of the soul'; Ej, G, Sg: 'the sweetness of delight of the Beloved.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'which is as it were bold.'

<sup>4</sup> [apeteter.]

<sup>6</sup> S: 'It produces that of cowardice.'

<sup>8</sup> S: 'The affection of boldness.'

<sup>10</sup> S: 'and for this reason He calls them "leaping,"'

<sup>11</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'the appetites.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'is understood the concupiscible.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit several words here.

<sup>7</sup> S omits 'concupiscible.'

<sup>9</sup> [apetecer.]

<sup>12</sup> Ej, G: 'He restrains.'

conjuring the leaping does, He satisfies it and subdues the desires and appetites which aforesaid roamed restlessly about, leaping like does from one thing to another in order to satisfy that concupiscence which is now satisfied by the pleasant lyres, whose sweetness it enjoys, and by the sirens' song, upon the delight whereof it pastures. And it is to be noted that it is not wrath and concupiscence which the Spouse conjures here, for these faculties are never wanting in the soul, but their troublesome and disorderly acts, which are denoted by the lions, harts and leaping does; it is necessary in this estate that these should cease.

### **Mountains, valleys, banks,**

8. By these three names are denoted the vicious and disorderly acts of the three faculties of the soul, which are memory, understanding and will, which acts are disorderly and vicious when they are carried to a high extreme, and likewise when they are at a low and defective extreme, or even when they are not at either extreme, but tend thereto in one direction. And thus by the mountains, which are very high, are signified acts which are extreme in being over-disorderly.<sup>1</sup> By the valleys, which are very low, are signified the acts of these three faculties, which are less extreme than is fitting. And by the banks, which are neither very high nor very low, yet, since they are not flat,<sup>2</sup> participate somewhat of the one extreme and of the other, are signified the acts of the faculties when these to some extent exceed or fail to reach that mean and level height of what is just. These acts, though not disorderly in the extreme,<sup>3</sup> as they would be if they amounted to mortal sin, are nevertheless partially so, since they are either venial sins or imperfections,<sup>4</sup> however slight, in the understanding, the memory and the will. All these acts which exceed what is just He conjures likewise, by the pleasant lyres and the aforementioned song, that they cease; the which lyres and song have brought the three faculties of the soul to such perfection of efficiency that they are completely occupied in the just operation which pertains to them, and this to such an extent that they avoid not only every extreme but also every tendency thereto. There follow the remaining lines:

**Waters, breezes, heats, And terrors that keep watch by night.**

9. By these four things, again, are understood<sup>5</sup> the affections of the

<sup>1</sup> S: 'which are at an excessive extreme. And by,' etc.

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G: 'though not to a disorderly extent extreme.'

<sup>4</sup> S: 'partially so, fringing venial sins or imperfections.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'not very flat.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'are signified.'

four passions, which, as we said, are grief, hope, joy and fear. By the waters are understood the affections of grief which afflict the soul; for they enter the soul like water, wherefore David said to God in speaking of them: *Salvum me fac, Deus, quoniam intraverunt aquæ usque ad animam meam*<sup>1</sup>. That is: Save me, my God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul. By the breezes He understands the affections of hope, for like the breezes they fly to desire that which is absent and is hoped for. Wherefore David says likewise: *Os meum aperui, et attraxi spiritum, quia mandata tua desiderabam*.<sup>2</sup> As though he were to say: I opened the mouth of my hope and drew in the breath of my desire, for I desired and hoped for Thy commandments. By the heats are understood the affections of the passion of joy, which enkindle the heart like fire; wherefore the same David says: *Concaluit cor meum intra me, et in meditatione mea exardescet ignis*.<sup>3</sup> Which signifies; My heart grew hot within me and in my meditation fire shall be enkindled; which is as much as to say: In my meditation shall joy be enkindled. By the terrors that keep watch by night are understood the affections of the other passion, which is fear; which affections, in spiritual persons that have not yet reached this estate of the Spiritual Marriage whereof we are speaking, are wont to be very great. At times they come from God, when He desires to grant such persons certain favours, as we have said above, and is wont to bring fear and affright to their spirits, and likewise<sup>4</sup> a shrinking to their flesh and senses, since they have not fortified and perfected their nature and habituated it to these favours. At times, again, they come from the devil, who, when God grants the soul recollection and sweetness in Himself, becomes very envious and greatly afflicted because of that blessing and peace which have come to the soul, and contrives to set horror and fear in its spirit, to hinder it from obtaining that blessing; sometimes he even threatens it within its very spirit. And when he sees that he cannot reach the inmost part of the soul, since it is deeply recollected and closely united with God, he then attacks it from without, in its sensual part, and sets<sup>5</sup> there distraction and inconstancy and sensible afflictions and pains and horror,<sup>6</sup> if haply by this means he may harry the Bride in her marriage-chamber. These things the Spouse calls<sup>7</sup> terrors of the night,<sup>8</sup> because they all

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxviii, 1. [A.V., lxxix, 1.]

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxviii, 131. [A.V., cxix, 131.]

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xxxviii, 4. [A.V., xxxix, 3.]

<sup>4</sup> S omits 'likewise.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'he contrives to [procura] set.' Cf. also p. 142, n. 1, above.

<sup>6</sup> Sg: 'inconstancy and appetites and sensible horror.'

<sup>7</sup> S: 'And the Spouse calls them.'

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'calls terrors that keep watch.'

come from evil spirits, and because by their means the devil tries to diffuse darkness in the soul, that he may obscure the Divine light wherein it is rejoicing. He says of these fears that they keep watch, because their effect is to cause the soul to watch and to awaken it from its sweet<sup>1</sup> inward sleep, and likewise because the evil spirits that cause them are ever watching to produce them. These fears, coming from God, or from the devil, as I have said, are infused passively into the spirits of those<sup>2</sup> who are already spiritual; and I treat not here of other fears which are temporal or natural, because it is not for spiritual people to have such fears, whereas to have the spiritual fears aforementioned is proper to spiritual people.<sup>3</sup>

10. So the Beloved likewise conjures all these four manners of affection of the four passions of the soul, making them to cease and be at rest, since He now gives to the Bride in this estate riches and strength and satisfaction in the pleasant lyres of His sweetness and the sirens' song of His delight, so that not only can these things not reign within her but they cannot even cause her the least degree of dispeace. For the grandeur and stability of the soul in this estate are so complete that, if formerly there reached the soul the waters of any grief soever, even those of its own sins or of the sins of some other person, which is what spiritual persons habitually feel the most, now,<sup>4</sup> although it still realizes their importance, they cause it neither pain nor sorrow;<sup>5</sup> and it no longer feels compassion,<sup>6</sup> though it performs the works of compassion and has the perfection thereof; for in this estate the soul has no longer that part of its virtues which was weak; but there remains to it that which was strong, constant and perfect in them; for in this transformation of love the soul<sup>7</sup> acts as do the angels, who apprehend perfectly things that are grievous without feeling grief, and practise works of mercy without feeling compassion;<sup>8</sup> although occasionally and at certain seasons God bestows a favour upon the soul, making it to feel things and suffer that it may grow in merit, and become more fervent in love, even as He did with the Virgin Mother,

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'its sublime.'

<sup>2</sup> S modifies thus: '... watching to produce them. These fears, which come passively from God or from the devil, as I have said, are infused into the souls—I mean into the spirits—of those . . .', etc.

<sup>3</sup> S modifies thus: 'because to have them belongs not to spiritual people, as it does to have the other fears aforementioned.'

<sup>4</sup> [The MSS. here read *y* ('and') for the *ya* ('now') of the first redaction. P. Silverio follows them, but, as the sense of the passage is destroyed by this reading, I prefer the other.]

<sup>5</sup> S: 'neither grief nor anguish of sorrow.'

<sup>6</sup> Sg: 'composition.'

<sup>7</sup> Sg: 'the Beloved.'

<sup>8</sup> Sg: 'composition.'

and with Saint Paul and others;<sup>1</sup> but the estate<sup>2</sup> does not imply this condition necessarily.

11. Neither is the soul afflicted by the desires of hope, for, being now satisfied with this union of God, in so far as is possible in this life, it has naught to hope for with respect to the world, and naught to desire with respect to that which is spiritual, since it sees and feels itself to be full of the riches of God, and thus, in life and in death, is conformed and reconciled<sup>3</sup> to God's will, saying, according to the sensitive and the spiritual part: *Fiat voluntas tua*, without being impelled by any other desire and appetite; and thus the desire to see God which it experiences is without affliction. Likewise the affections of joy, which were wont to be felt by the soul, to a greater or a lesser degree, seem to be in no way diminished, nor does their abundance cause it surprise. For its rejoicing is habitually so great<sup>4</sup> that, like the sea, it<sup>5</sup> is not diminished by the rivers that flow from it, neither is it increased by those that enter it; for it is within this soul that there is made that spring, the water whereof, as Christ says, through Saint John, springs up to eternal life.<sup>6</sup>

12. And since I have said that the soul in this case receives nothing new in this estate of transformation, wherein it seems to lose accidental joys, which are granted even to the glorified, it must be known that, although such a soul is not without those accidental sweetnesses and joys<sup>7</sup>—nay, rather, those which it habitually has are innumerable—it has no increase<sup>8</sup> as to the substantial communication of the spirit, for the reason that all that is capable of coming to it anew it has already had; and thus that which it has in itself is greater than that which comes to it anew. Therefore, whenever things of joy and gladness<sup>9</sup> present themselves to such a soul—be they exterior, or spiritual and interior—the soul at once turns to enjoy the riches that it already has in itself, and has far greater joy and delight in them than<sup>10</sup> in those

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'with the Magdalen and with Saint Paul and others.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg: 'but the affection.'

<sup>3</sup> S modifies: '... riches of God, although it may grow in charity, and thus in death and life it is conformed and reconciled.' Sg reads: *ajuntada* ['united'] for *ajustada* ['reconciled'].

<sup>4</sup> S: 'for, so great is the abundance which it habitually enjoys.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'that it is like the sea, which.'

<sup>6</sup> St. John iv, 14.

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'although such a soul be not without these accidental joys.'

<sup>8</sup> S adds: 'of joy.' A reads: 'it rises for naught.'

<sup>9</sup> Ej reads: 'of joy and riches—I mean delight,' and omits several clauses following. G reads: 'whenever things of joy and riches—I mean delight therein—present themselves to such a soul, those which come to it anew ...' [Neither reading preserves the sense, or the thought, of the text above.]

<sup>10</sup> [The original has 'and,' but the sense is clearly as in the text above.]

which come to it anew, because in some manner it has gained herein possession of God; Who, though He delights in all things, delights in them less than in Himself, because in Himself He has good which is eminent above them all. And thus all new joys and pleasures which this soul receives serve it rather as reminders<sup>1</sup> to rejoice in what it already has and feels within itself than in these new acquisitions,<sup>2</sup> for, as I say, it is greater than they.

13. And it is natural that, when a thing causes the soul joy and contentment, if the soul has something else that it prizes more highly and that gives it more pleasure, it should remember this immediately and set its pleasure and joy upon it.<sup>3</sup> And thus the accidental character of these new spiritual acquisitions, and the new experiences that they bring to the soul, are so little by comparison with that substantial communication which it already has within itself that we may truly describe it as being nothing, for the soul that has reached this fullness<sup>4</sup> of transformation, wherein it is full-grown, continues not to grow<sup>5</sup> by reason of new spiritual acquisitions, as do others who have not attained to this estate. But it is a wondrous thing to see that while the soul receives no new delights it always seems to be doing so, and also to have been in possession of them. The reason is that it is ever tasting them anew, because the good which they bring is ever new; and thus it seems continually to be receiving new acquisitions without having any need to receive them.

14. But if we could wish to speak of the illumination of glory which God<sup>6</sup> sometimes bestows upon the soul in this habitual embrace that He has given to it, which is, as it were, a spiritual turning<sup>7</sup> to it, wherein He makes it at the same time to behold and to enjoy this abyss of delights and riches which He has set within it, there is naught that could be said which would express any part of it. For, as the sun when it shines fully upon<sup>8</sup> the sea illumines even its profoundest depths<sup>9</sup> and caverns, and reveals the pearls and richest veins of gold and other precious minerals, etc., so this Divine Sun, the Spouse, turns to the Bride and, as it were, brings to light the riches of the soul, so that even

<sup>1</sup> Sg reads *serian* for *serven*: 'would rather be to it reminders.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'than in the same new acquisitions.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej modifies: '... that when the soul has in itself something of joy and contentment that it greatly prizes, if another and a lesser thing comes to it, it should remember this immediately and set its pleasure upon it.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, Sg: 'this point.'

<sup>5</sup> S adds: 'with respect to the estate.'

<sup>6</sup> The word 'God' occurs only in S, though in all the versions it is clearly implied by the context.

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'conversion.'] S reads: 'conversation.' ■ [*Lit.*, 'fully assails.']

<sup>8</sup> [*senos, lit.*, 'cavities,' 'holes,' translated above as 'recesses.' Cf. p. 163, n. 2.]

the angels marvel and repeat those words of the Songs which say: 'Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, choice as the sun, terrible in her array<sup>1</sup> as the ranks of armies?'<sup>2</sup> In this illumination, great as is its excellence, the soul has no increase, but there is simply revealed that which she already has, to the end that she may rejoice therein.

15. Finally, the terrors that keep watch by night come not nigh her, since she is so pure and so strong,<sup>3</sup> and her repose is so firmly fixed upon God that the evil spirits can neither enfold her in<sup>4</sup> their darkness nor affright her with their terrors, nor awaken her with their violence; wherefore naught can approach her or trouble her, since she has left all things else and entered into her God, where she has fruition of all peace, tastes all sweetness, and delights in all delight, in so far as the condition and estate of this life allow. For of the soul in such a case is understood that which the Wise Man says, namely: 'The peaceful and quiet<sup>5</sup> soul is as a continual feast.'<sup>6</sup> For, even as at a feast there is the savour of all kinds of meat and the sweetness of all kinds of music, even so in this feast which the soul now enjoys in the bosom of the Spouse, she rejoices in all delight and tastes all sweetness. And what we have said, and indeed all that words can express, is so small a part of what comes to pass here that no more than the smallest part could ever be described of the experience of the soul that reaches this happy estate. For, if the soul is enabled to reach the peace of God, which, as the Church says,<sup>7</sup> surpasses all that is of sense,<sup>8</sup> then all that is of sense will remain bereft and mute in speaking thereof. There follows the first line of the second stanza.

**By the pleasant lyres And by the sirens' song, I conjure you,**

16. We have already explained that by the pleasant lyres the Spouse here signifies the sweetness diffused by the soul in this estate, whereby He causes all its troubles whereof we have spoken to cease. For, even as the music of the lyres fills the soul<sup>9</sup> with sweetness and refreshment, and absorbs and enraptures it so as to transport it far from distresses and afflictions, even so this sweetness keeps the soul so completely within itself that no grievous thing reaches it.<sup>10</sup> And thus it is as though

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'terrible and ordered.']

<sup>2</sup> Canticles vi, 9. [A.V., vi, 10.]

<sup>3</sup> A: 'so pure [*clara*] and so perfect.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'darken her with.']

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg read: 'secure' for 'quiet.'

<sup>6</sup> Proverbs xv, 15.

<sup>7</sup> S: 'as St. Paul says.'

<sup>8</sup> [I.e., 'passeth all understanding.'] Philippians iv, 7.

<sup>9</sup> A number of authorities read: 'the spirit.'

<sup>10</sup> Bg: 'so as to detach it from itself, without savour of distresses or troubles; thus this distress [*sic*] keeps the soul within itself so completely that no grievous thing wounds it.'

He were to say: By the sweetness that I set in the soul, let all things that are not sweet to the soul cease. It has likewise been said that the sirens' song signifies the habitual delight which the soul possesses. And this delight He calls the sirens' song because, even as (so they say) the sirens' song is so delectable and delicious as to enrapture and enamour one who hears it and thus to make him as forgetful as one that is borne away from all things, even so the delight of this union absorbs<sup>1</sup> the soul in itself and refreshes it, in such a way as to give it a charm against all the troubles and disturbances<sup>2</sup> caused by the things aforementioned; which are understood in this line:

**And cease your wrath<sup>3</sup>**

17. Indicating by wrath the said disturbances and troubles of the disorderly affections and operations whereof we have spoken. And because, even as wrath is a certain impetuosity that disturbs peace, going beyond the limits thereof, even so all the affections, etc.,<sup>4</sup> aforementioned transgress the limits of the peace and tranquillity of the soul, disquieting it when they touch it. Wherefore He says:

**And touch not the wall,**

18. By the wall is meant the fence of peace and the rampart of virtues and perfections wherewith the same soul is now fenced around and guarded; for she is the garden whereof mention has been made above, where her Beloved pastures on the flowers, and which is fenced around and guarded for Him alone. Wherefore He speaks of her in the Songs as of a garden enclosed, saying: 'My sister is a garden enclosed.'<sup>5</sup> And thus He says that they are not to touch even the fence and the wall of this His garden.

**That the Bride may sleep more securely.**

19. That is to say, that she may delight<sup>6</sup> the more according to her pleasure in the quiet and sweetness whereof she has fruition in the Beloved. Whence it must be known that there is now no door closed to the soul, but that it is in her power to enjoy this sweet sleep of love every time and whensoever she desires, according as the Spouse

<sup>1</sup> B, Bg: 'darkens.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg: 'against all other things and troubles and tribulations.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'Cease your wrath.' [Cf. p. 144, n. 5, above. The 'and' is found here, though not in the poem.]

<sup>4</sup> G: 'all the disorderly operations and affections.'

<sup>5</sup> Canticles iv, 12. Av and Bz omit the quotation.

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G: 'The Bride having already endeavoured this, namely, to delight . . .'

declares in the Songs, saying: 'I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and the harts of the fields, that ye stir not up nor awake the beloved till she please.'<sup>1</sup>

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**S**O great was the desire of the Spouse to complete the liberation and ransoming of this His Bride from the hands of sensuality and the devil that, having done so, as He has done here, He rejoices<sup>2</sup> as the good Shepherd rejoices, bearing upon His shoulders<sup>3</sup> the sheep which He had lost and sought by many devious paths, and as the woman, when she has in her hands the piece of silver to find which she had lighted the candle, and turned all the house about, delights, calls her friends and neighbours<sup>4</sup> and gives thanks with them, saying: 'Rejoice with me, etc.'<sup>5</sup> Even so it is a wonderful thing to see this loving Shepherd and Spouse of the soul and the pleasure and the joy which He has when He sees the soul, now won and perfected in this way, lying upon His shoulders and held by His own hands in this longed-for embrace and union. And not only does He Himself rejoice, but He likewise makes the angels and holy souls participators of His gladness,<sup>6</sup> saying, as in the Songs: 'Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his betrothal, and in the day of the joy of his heart.'<sup>7</sup> In these words aforesaid He calls the soul His crown, His Bride,<sup>8</sup> and the joy of His heart, carrying her at last in His arms, and dealing with her as the Spouse of her bridechamber. All this He declares in the following stanza.

#### STANZA XXII

**The Bride has entered Into the pleasant garden of her desire,<sup>9</sup>  
And at her pleasure rests, Her neck reclining<sup>10</sup> on the gentle  
arms of the Beloved.<sup>11</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Canticles iii, 5.

<sup>2</sup> S: 'that having done to this point as has been seen, now also He rejoices.'

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke xv, 5.

<sup>4</sup> S has these two substantives in their feminine form; the other authorities use the masculine or common gender.

<sup>5</sup> St. Luke xv, 9.

<sup>6</sup> S: 'of His glory.'

<sup>7</sup> Canticles iii, 11.

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G: 'In these words spoken to her heart, He calls the soul Bride.'

<sup>9</sup> [*Lit.*, 'pleasant desired garden.']

<sup>10</sup> Ej, G: 'declining' [i.e. 'leaning'].

<sup>11</sup> A: 'of her Beloved.'

## EXPOSITION

2. The Bride having now done all in her power that the foxes may be driven away and the north wind may depart, and the nymphs be stilled, since these have been hindrances and inconveniences impeding the perfect delight of the estate of the Spiritual Marriage; and having likewise invoked and obtained the breeze of the Holy Spirit (as has been described in the preceding stanzas), which is the proper disposition and means for the perfection of this estate: it now remains to treat, in this stanza, of this estate, wherein the Spouse now speaks to the soul, calling her His Bride, and says two things. He says, first, that the soul, having issued forth victoriously, has now attained to this delectable estate of the Spiritual Marriage which both He and she had so greatly desired. The second thing that He does is to enumerate the properties of the said estate, of which properties the soul now has fruition in Him, and these are for her to rest at her pleasure and for her neck to recline upon the gentle arms of the Beloved, even as we shall now go on to show in our exposition.

**The Bride has entered**

3. In order that we may expound the arrangement of these stanzas the more exactly, and describe the soul's habitual progress ere it reach this estate of the Spiritual Marriage, which is the highest estate that, by Divine favour, we have now to describe, it is to be noted that, ere the soul reaches this estate, it exercises itself first of all in the trials and bitternesses of mortification and in meditation upon spiritual things, as the soul said at the beginning from the first stanza down to that which says: 'Scattering a thousand graces.' And afterwards it enters upon the contemplative way,<sup>1</sup> wherein it passes through the ways and straits of love which have been described in the stanzas following,<sup>2</sup> as far as that which says 'Withdraw them, Beloved,' wherein was made the Spiritual Betrothal. And beyond this point it goes along the unitive way, wherein it receives many and very great communications and visits and gifts and jewels from the Spouse, even as does an affianced bride, and continually increases in knowledge and perfection in His love,<sup>3</sup> as it has described from the said stanza wherein this betrothal was made and which says 'Withdraw them, Beloved,' even to this present one which

<sup>1</sup> B, Bg, Ej, G have: *vida* ['life'] for *via* ['way'].

<sup>2</sup> S: 'in the progress of the stanzas.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz, Ej, Sg: 'and is continually entering into His love and increasing in perfection thereof.'

begins: 'The Bride has entered. . . .' It now remains for the said Spiritual Marriage to be made between the soul aforementioned and the Son of God. This is without comparison far greater than the Spiritual Betrothal<sup>1</sup> because it is a total transformation<sup>2</sup> in the Beloved, wherein on either side there is made surrender by total possession of the one to the other with a certain consummation<sup>3</sup> of union of love, wherein the soul is made Divine and becomes God by participation, in so far as may be in this life. And thus I think that this estate is never attained without the soul being confirmed in grace therein; for the faithfulness of both is confirmed, that of God being confirmed in the soul; wherefore this is the highest estate which in this life is attainable. For, even as in the consummation<sup>4</sup> of marriage according to the flesh the two become one flesh, as says the Divine Scripture,<sup>5</sup> even so, when this Spiritual Marriage between God and the soul is consummated, there are two natures in one spirit and love, even as says Saint Paul, making this same comparison and saying: 'He that is joined unto the Lord is made one spirit with Him';<sup>6</sup> even as when the light of the star or of the candle is joined and united with that of the sun, so that that which shines is not the star or the candle but the sun, which has absorbed the other lights in itself. And of this estate the Spouse treats in the present line, saying: 'The Bride has entered'—that is to say, has gone out from all that is temporal and from all that is natural,<sup>7</sup> and from all spiritual manners and modes and affections, and, having left behind and forgotten all temptations, disturbances,<sup>8</sup> griefs, anxiety<sup>9</sup> and cares, is transformed in this sublime embrace. Of this the following line goes on to treat, namely:

**Into the pleasant garden of her desire,**

4. This is as though she were to say: She has been transformed in God, Who it is that is here called a pleasant garden, by reason of the delectable and sweet repose which the soul finds in Him. The soul does not come to this garden of complete transformation (which is the joy and delight and glory of the Spiritual Marriage) without first passing through the Spiritual Betrothal<sup>10</sup> and through the mutual and loyal love of those that are betrothed. For, after the soul has been for some

<sup>1</sup> B, Bg omit the words: 'between the soul . . . Spiritual Betrothal.'

<sup>2</sup> A: 'a total spiritual transformation.'

<sup>4</sup> B, Bg: 'in the communication.'

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians vi, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'and from all that is natural.'

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'disturbances.'

<sup>10</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'through the Betrothal.'

<sup>3</sup> B: 'with a certain communication.'

<sup>5</sup> Genesis ii, 24.

<sup>9</sup> [*sic.* Cf. p. 134, n. 1.]

time the Bride of the Son of God, in love which is sweet and perfect, God calls her and sets her in this His flowering garden for the consummation of this most happy estate of marriage with Him, wherein is effected such union of the two natures and such communication<sup>1</sup> of the Divine nature to the human, that, while neither of them changes its being, each of them appears to be God. Although in this life this thing cannot come to pass perfectly, yet it surpasses everything that can be described or conceived.

5. This is very clearly expressed by the Spouse Himself in the Songs, where He invites the soul, now made His Bride, to this estate, saying: *Veni in hortum meum, soror mea sponsa, messui myrrham meam cum aromatibus meis.*<sup>2</sup> Which signifies: Come and enter into My garden, My sister, My spouse, for I have now gathered My myrrh with My fragrant spices.<sup>3</sup> He calls her sister and spouse because this she was in the love and surrender of herself which she had made to Him before He called her<sup>4</sup> to this estate of the Spiritual Marriage, where He says that He has now gathered<sup>5</sup> His fragrant myrrh and aromatic spices, which are the fruits of the flowers, now ripe and made ready for the soul, the which fruits are the delights and grandeurs<sup>6</sup> that He Himself communicates to her in this estate—that is, He communicates them to her in Himself; for the which cause He is to her the pleasant garden of her desire. For the whole desire and aim of the soul, and that of God in all the works<sup>7</sup> of the soul, is the consummation<sup>8</sup> and perfection of this estate, wherefore the soul never rests until she reaches Him; for in this estate she finds much greater abundance and fullness of God and a peace<sup>9</sup> more sure and stable, and a sweetness more perfect<sup>10</sup> without compare than in the Spiritual Betrothal, since she is now placed in the arms of such a Spouse, Whose close spiritual embrace she habitually feels—a true embrace, by means whereof the soul lives the life of God. For in this soul is fulfilled that which Saint Paul says: ‘I live, yet not I, for Christ liveth in me.’<sup>11</sup> Wherefore, since the soul now lives a life so happy and glorious as this life of God, let each one consider, if he can, how delectable a life will be that which the soul

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: ‘and such consummation.’

<sup>2</sup> Canticles v, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ej omits the vernacular of this quotation.

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G: ‘before He brought her near.’

<sup>5</sup> Ej: ‘watered’ [*regada* for *segada*].

<sup>6</sup> G: ‘delights and graces’; Sg: ‘delights and graces and grandeurs.’

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G: ‘in all the things and works.’

<sup>8</sup> B, Bz, G: ‘is the communication.’

<sup>9</sup> [P. Silverio has the incorrect reading *haç* (‘face’) for *paç* (‘peace’).]

<sup>10</sup> A: ‘more secure.’

<sup>11</sup> Galatians ii, 20. S has: ‘I live, but yet . . .’ [with the emphatic form of the pronoun].

lives, wherein neither can God perceive aught that is displeasing to Him, nor does the soul perceive it, but the soul enjoys and perceives the delight of the glory of God in its very substance, which is now transformed in Him. Wherefore the next line continues :

**And at her pleasure rests, Her neck reclining<sup>1</sup> . . .**

6. Here the neck signifies the strength of the soul, by means whereof, as we have said, is wrought this embrace and union between the soul and the Spouse; for the soul could not bear so close an embrace if it were not already very strong. And because in this strength the soul laboured, and practised the virtues, and conquered the vices, therefore it is just that, after it has conquered and laboured, it should take its repose with its neck reclining

**. . . on the gentle arms of the Beloved.**

7. For the neck to recline on the arms of God is for it to have its strength now united—or rather, its weakness—in the strength of God;<sup>2</sup> for the arms of God signify the strength of God;<sup>3</sup> wherein our weakness, reclining upon Him and transformed in Him, has now the strength of God Himself. Wherefore it is very convenient to denote this estate of the Spiritual Marriage by this reclining of the neck on the gentle arms of the Beloved, since God is now both the strength and the gentleness of the soul, in Whom it is defended and protected from all evils and in Whom it savours all good things.<sup>4</sup> Hence the Bride in the Songs, being desirous of this estate, said to the Spouse: ‘Who would give Thee to me, my brother, that Thou mightest suck the breasts of my mother, so that I might find Thee alone without and might kiss Thee,<sup>5</sup> and none would then despise me?’<sup>6</sup> By calling Him her brother, she denotes the equality which there is in the betrothal of love between the two before they attain to this estate. By saying ‘that Thou mightest suck the breasts of my mother,’ she means, that Thou mightest quench and dry up in me the desires and passions, which are the breasts and the milk of Mother Eve<sup>7</sup> in our flesh, and are a hindrance to this estate. And thus, she continues, when this is done, ‘I might find Thee alone without’—that is: I might go out from all things, even from myself, in solitude and detachment of spirit, when once the aforementioned desires are dried up; and there I, being alone, ‘might kiss Thee,’ Who

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G omit the commentary on these lines.

<sup>2</sup> Bg: ‘its weakness—upon the arms of God and upon His strength.’

<sup>3</sup> S omits this clause.

<sup>4</sup> Bg: ‘and might care for thee.’

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: ‘and favoured in all good things.’

<sup>6</sup> Canticles viii, 1.

<sup>7</sup> S: ‘of our mother Eve.’

art alone—that is to say: My nature, now that it is alone and detached from all impurity, temporal, natural and spiritual, might be united with Thee alone,<sup>1</sup> with Thy nature alone, and without any other intermediaries,<sup>2</sup> which alone comes to pass in the Spiritual Marriage,<sup>3</sup> which is the kiss of God by the soul, where none despises it or assaults it; for in this estate neither devil nor flesh nor world nor desires molest it. For herein is fulfilled that which is said in the Songs: ‘Winter is now past and the rain has gone and the flowers have appeared in our land.’<sup>4</sup>

#### ANNOTATION OF THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**I**n this high estate of the Spiritual Marriage the Spouse reveals His wondrous secrets to the soul, as to His faithful consort, with great readiness and frequency, for true and perfect love<sup>5</sup> can keep nothing hidden from the person loved. He communicates principally to it sweet mysteries<sup>6</sup> concerning His Incarnation and the modes and ways of human redemption, which is one of the highest works of God, and is thus most delectable to the soul. For this reason, although He communicates to it many other mysteries, the Spouse makes mention in the stanza following of His Incarnation only, as being the most important of all; and thus He speaks to her and says:

#### STANZA XXIII

**Beneath the apple-tree,<sup>7</sup> There wert thou betrothed to me;  
There did I give thee my hand<sup>8</sup> And thou wert redeemed where  
thy mother had been corrupted.<sup>9</sup>**

#### EXPOSITION

2. The Spouse sets forth to the soul in this stanza the wondrous manner and plan of His redemption of her and of His betrothal of her to Himself, using the same terms as to describe the corruption and ruin of the human race, and saying that, even as by means of the forbidden tree of Paradise she was ruined and corrupted in her human nature through Adam, even so upon the Tree of the Cross she was redeemed and restored, by His giving her the hand of His favour and

<sup>1</sup> S adds: ‘—that is.’

<sup>2</sup> Sg omits: ‘and without any . . . Marriage.’

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: ‘because in truth true love.’

<sup>4</sup> Bg has ‘an’ for ‘the.’

<sup>5</sup> A: ‘There did I stretch forth my hand.’

<sup>6</sup> S adds: ‘save love.’

<sup>7</sup> Canticles ii, 11–12.

<sup>8</sup> Ej: ‘great mysteries and sweet.’

<sup>9</sup> Bg has ‘was’ for ‘had been.’

mercy,<sup>1</sup> through His death and passion, and raising the barriers<sup>2</sup> that came from<sup>3</sup> original sin between the soul and God. And thus she says:

**Beneath the apple-tree,**

3. That is, beneath the favour of the Tree of the Cross, which is here understood by the apple-tree, whereon the Son of God redeemed human nature, and, in consequence, betrothed it to Himself,<sup>4</sup> and consequently betrothed to Himself every soul, giving to each soul in token thereof grace and pledges in the Cross. And thus He says:

**There wert thou betrothed to me;  
There did I give thee my hand**

4. This is to say, the hand of My favour and help, raising thee up from thy low estate<sup>5</sup> to be My companion and My betrothed.

**And thou wert redeemed where thy mother had been corrupted.**

5. For thy mother, human nature, was corrupted in thy first parents beneath the tree, and there likewise wert thou redeemed—namely, beneath the Tree of the Cross. So that, if thy mother gave thee death beneath the tree, I gave thee life beneath the Tree of the Cross. After this manner God continues to reveal to the soul the ordinances and dispositions of His wisdom; since He is able so wisely and beauteously to bring good from evil, and to ordain to our greater good that which was the cause of evil. That which is literally contained<sup>6</sup> in this stanza is said by the same Spouse to the Bride in the Songs, where He says: *Sub arbore malo suscitavi te: ibi corrupta est mater tua, ibi violata est genitrix tua.*<sup>7</sup> Which signifies: Under the apple-tree I raised thee up; there thy mother was corrupted,<sup>8</sup> and there was she violated that bore thee.

6. This betrothal that was made upon the Cross is not that whereof we are now speaking; for that is a betrothal which is made once for all<sup>9</sup> when God gives to the soul the first grace, which comes to every soul in baptism. But this betrothal is after the way of perfection, which

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G: 'favour and friendship.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the truces.'] Av: 'the surrenders.' A note by the copyist indicates that he was doubtful as to the true form of the word. A: 'attaining the truces.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg have 'through' for 'from.'

<sup>4</sup> S: '... the Son of God won victory, and, in consequence, betrothed human nature to Himself.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'from [a] miserable and low estate.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'literally understood.'

<sup>7</sup> Canticles viii, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Jaén, A, B, Bg: *extraída* [see p. 138, n. 3, above]. Av: 'corrupt.' S, Sg: 'corrupted.' Bz: 'destroyed.' Ej, G omit the translation of this Latin text.

<sup>9</sup> S: 'for that is made once for all.'

takes place only gradually and by stages; and, although they are both one, the difference is that the one<sup>1</sup> is wrought at the soul's pace, and so is gradual, while the other is according to God's pace, and thus is wrought once and for all. For this betrothal whereof we are treating is that which God describes through Ezechiel, speaking with the soul after this manner: 'Thou wast cast out upon the earth, in despite of thy soul, on the day that thou wast born. And, passing by thee, I saw thee trodden under foot in thy blood, and I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood: "Live";<sup>2</sup> and I caused thee to multiply like the grass of the field; thou didst multiply and grow great, and didst enter in and come to the greatness of woman; and thy breasts grew and thy hair was multiplied, and thou wast naked and full of confusion. And I passed by thee and looked upon thee, and I saw that thy time was the time of lovers, and I spread my mantle over thee and covered thy ignominy. And I made an oath to thee and entered into a covenant with thee and made thee mine. And I washed thee with water, and I washed away the blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil, and clothed thee with colours and shod thee with hyacinth, and girded thee with fine linen and clothed thee with fine garments. And I decked thee with ornaments, put bracelets on thy hands and a chain on thy neck. And upon thy mouth I put a jewel,<sup>3</sup> and in thy ears earrings and a crown of beauty upon thy head. And thou wert decked with gold and silver, and clothed in fine linen and brodered silks and many colours; bread very choice and honey and oil didst thou eat, and thou becamest of mighty<sup>4</sup> beauty, and camest even to reign and be a queen, and thy name went forth among the peoples because of thy beauty.'<sup>5</sup> Thus far go the words of Ezechiel. And this is the condition of the soul of whom we are here speaking.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**B**UT after this delectable surrender of the Bride and the Beloved, that which then follows immediately is the bed of them both, wherein the Bride tastes the aforementioned delights of the Spouse very much more abidingly; and thus the following<sup>6</sup> stanza

<sup>1</sup> S: 'is that the latter.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'And, passing that way, I saw thee trodden under foot in thy blood; I lived.' Bz omits: 'when thou wast in thy blood.'

<sup>3</sup> *zarcillo*. The word [also means earrings, and] is used by A, B, Bg five words later [where Jaén has *cerquillos*, 'earrings'].

<sup>4</sup> Sg: 'fit,' 'due.'

<sup>5</sup> Ezechiel xvi, 5-14.

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'the present.' Stanza XXIV is in either case referred to.

treats of His bed and hers, which is divine, pure and chaste, wherein the soul is divine, pure and chaste. For the bed is naught else than her very Spouse, the Word, Son of God, as will presently be said, wherein, by means of the said union of love, she takes her rest. This bed she calls flower-like,<sup>1</sup> because not only is her Spouse flower-like,<sup>2</sup> but, as He Himself says of Himself in the Songs, He is the very flower of the field and the lily of the valleys.<sup>3</sup> And thus the soul rests, not only in the flowery bed, but in the flower itself, which is the Son of God, the which flower has in itself divine odour and fragrance and grace and beauty, as He says also through David, in these words: 'The beauty of the field is with me',<sup>4</sup> wherefore the soul sings the properties and graces of her bed, and says:

## STANZA XXIV

**Our flowery bed, Encompassed<sup>5</sup> with dens of lions,  
Hung with purple<sup>6</sup> and builded in peace, Crowned with a  
thousand shields of gold.**

## EXPOSITION

2. In two earlier<sup>7</sup> stanzas the Bride-Soul has sung of the graces and wonders of her Beloved, the Son of God. And in this stanza she not only continues the recital thereof, but likewise sings of the happy and high estate wherein she sees herself set, and of its security. And thirdly she sings of the riches of the gifts and virtues wherewith she sees herself endowed<sup>8</sup> and adorned, in the nuptial chamber of her Spouse. For she says that she is already in union with God, and possesses the virtues in strength. Fourthly, that she now has perfection of love.<sup>9</sup> Fifthly, that she has perfect spiritual peace,<sup>10</sup> and that she is wholly enriched and beautified with gifts and virtues, such as it is possible to possess and enjoy in this life, as will be explained progressively in the lines of the

<sup>1</sup> *florido* [translated 'flowery' in the stanza below].

<sup>2</sup> See preceding note.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xlix, 11. [A.V., l, 11.]

<sup>3</sup> Canticles ii, 1.

<sup>5</sup> A: 'exalted.'

<sup>6</sup> Bg, G: 'dyed in purple.'

<sup>7</sup> The text [which P. Silverio follows] has: 'In the last two stanzas,' referring to Stanzas XIII and XIV in the Sanlúcar Codex (cf. p. 86, above), which numbers this stanza XV. [In the present redaction the two stanzas referred to are numbered XIV and XV.]

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'ornamented.'

<sup>9</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'she now has perfected love.'

<sup>10</sup> Av: 'that she has spiritual peace, perfected and beautified . . .'

stanza. The first theme, then, of which she sings is the delight<sup>1</sup> that she enjoys in the union of the Beloved, saying:

### Our flowery bed,

3. We have already said that this bed of the soul is the Spouse,<sup>2</sup> the Son of God, Who is flower-like<sup>3</sup> to the soul; for now that she is united with Him, and reposes in Him, and has become His bride, there are communicated to her the breast and the love of the Beloved, which is for the wisdom and secrets and graces and virtues and gifts of God to be communicated to her, wherewith she becomes so greatly beautified, so rich and so full of delights, that she thinks herself to be upon a bed made of a variety of sweet and divine flowers, which delight her as she touches them and refresh her with their fragrance; for the which cause she very properly<sup>4</sup> calls this bond of love with God a flowery bed; for so the Bride calls it, where she speaks to the Beloved in the Songs, saying: *Lectulus noster floridus*,<sup>5</sup> that is: Our flowery bed. And she calls it 'ours,' because the same virtues and the same love (namely, those of the Beloved) are common to both, and the same delight is common to both, even as the Holy Spirit says in the Proverbs, in these words: 'My delights are with the sons of men.'<sup>6</sup> She calls it flowery also, because in this estate the virtues are now perfect and heroic in the soul, the which thing could not be until the bed had become flowery in perfect union<sup>7</sup> with God. And so she next sings of the second theme, in the line following, saying:

### Encompassed with dens of lions,

4. Meaning by dens of lions the virtues which the soul possesses in this estate of union with God. The reason is that the dens of lions are most secure and protected<sup>8</sup> from all other beasts, since these fear the strength and boldness of the lion that is within, and hence not only dare not to enter, but dare not even to tarry near.<sup>9</sup> And thus each of the virtues, when the soul at last possesses them in perfection, is to her like a lion's den, wherein Christ the Spouse dwells and is present, united with the soul in that virtue and in each of the other virtues, like a strong lion. And the soul herself, united with Him in these same

<sup>1</sup> A, B, Bg: 'is the desire.'

<sup>2</sup> [*florido*.]

<sup>3</sup> Canticles i, 15 [A.V., i, 16]. Ej, G, Sg omit the following words: 'that is: Our flowery bed.'

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs viii, 31.

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'and protected.'

<sup>6</sup> S: 'is the breast and love of the Spouse.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'very properly.'

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'in perfection and union.'

<sup>9</sup> A: 'even to pass near.'

virtues, is also like a strong lion, for there she is given<sup>1</sup> the properties<sup>2</sup> of God. And thus in this case the soul is so well protected and so strong<sup>3</sup> in each of the virtues and in all of them together, reposing on this flowery bed of union with her God, that not only do the evil spirits not presume to attack her, but they dare not even appear before her, by reason of the great fear which they have of her, when they see her so greatly exalted, encouraged and emboldened with the perfect virtues in the bed of the Beloved. For, since she is united in transformation of union,<sup>4</sup> they fear her as much as they fear God Himself and dare not even look upon her: greatly does the devil fear the soul that has perfection.

5. She says likewise that the bed is encompassed with these dens—namely, the virtues<sup>5</sup>—because in this estate the virtues are linked among themselves, united and strengthened mutually and ordered in the soul's complete perfection, each being supported by others,<sup>6</sup> in such a way that there is no weak or exposed part of it where the devil can enter, neither can aught in the world, high or low, cause her unrest, disturb her or even move her; for being now free from all disturbance of the natural passions, and withdrawn and detached from the torture and diversity<sup>7</sup> of temporal cares, as she is here, the soul has fruition, in security and tranquillity, of the participation of God. This very thing is that which was desired by the Bride in the Songs, where she says: 'Would that Thou mightest be given to me, my brother, to suck the breasts of my mother,<sup>8</sup> so that I might find Thee alone without, and that I might kiss Thee and that no man might now despise me!<sup>9</sup> This kiss is the union whereof we are speaking, wherein<sup>10</sup> the soul is made equal with God through love. Wherefore she has this desire, asking to be given the Beloved that He may be her brother, which phrase signifies and makes equality; and that He may suck the breasts of her mother, which signifies the consuming of all the imperfections and desires of her nature which she has from her mother Eve; and that she may find Him alone without, that is, may be united with Him alone, far away from all things, detached, according to the will and the desire, from them all; and thus none will despise her, that is

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'she resists her opponents and is given.'

<sup>2</sup> A: 'the same virtues and properties.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg: 'so pure and strong.'

<sup>4</sup> Av, Bz, Ej, G, Sg, S: 'transformation of love.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'with these virtues.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G omit: 'and ordered . . . by others.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'and diversity.'

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G omit all the rest of this paragraph save the last sentence.

<sup>9</sup> Canticles viii, 1.

<sup>10</sup> S adds: 'in a certain manner.'

to say, neither world nor flesh nor devil<sup>1</sup> will attack her; for, when the soul is free and purged from all these things and united with God, none of them can annoy her. Hence it is that the soul in this estate enjoys an habitual sweetness and tranquillity which is never lost to her and never fails her.

6. But, over and above this habitual satisfaction and peace, the flowers, or virtues, of this garden whereof we speak are wont to open in the soul and diffuse their fragrance in it after such manner that the soul seems to be, and in fact is, filled with delights from God. And I said<sup>2</sup> that the flowers, or virtues, which are in the soul are wont to open, because, although the soul is full of virtues in perfection,<sup>3</sup> it is not always actually enjoying them (although, as I have said, it does habitually enjoy the peace and tranquillity which they cause it); for we can say that in this life<sup>4</sup> they are in the soul as flowers in bud, tightly closed, in a garden—it is a marvellous thing at times to see them all opening, by the work of the Holy Spirit, and diffusing marvellous scent and fragrance in great variety. For it will come to pass that the soul will see in itself the flowers of the mountains whereof we spoke above, which are the abundance and greatness and beauty of God; with these will be intertwined the lilies of the wooded valleys, which are rest, refreshment and protection; and then there will be placed among them the fragrant roses<sup>5</sup> of the strange islands, which, as we say, are the strange kinds of knowledge concerning God; and likewise it will be assailed by the fragrance of the water-lilies from the sounding rivers,<sup>6</sup> which we said were the greatness of God that fills the entire soul; and intertwined and enlaced with these is the delicate scent of the jasmine (which is the whisper of the amorous breezes), whereof we said likewise that the soul has fruition in this estate; and furthermore all the other virtues and gifts<sup>7</sup> which come, as we said, from tranquil knowledge and silent music and sonorous solitude<sup>8</sup> and the delectable supper of love. And the enjoyment and perception by the soul of these flowers is at times of such a kind that the soul can say with complete truth: 'Our flowery bed, encompassed with dens of lions.' Happy the soul that in this life merits at times to taste<sup>9</sup> the fragrance of these Divine flowers. She says also that this bed is

### Hung with purple<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S: 'neither world, devil nor flesh.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G: 'in perfection in possession.'

<sup>5</sup> E, Ej, Sg: 'the roses.'

<sup>7</sup> B, Jaén omit: 'and gifts.'

<sup>9</sup> Ej, G, Sg, 5: 'to enjoy.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'And I say.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'that in this estate.'

<sup>6</sup> A has *lirios* ['lilies'] for *rtos* ['rivers'].

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G: 'and sonorous sweetness.'

<sup>10</sup> Bg: 'dyed in purple.'

7. By purple, in the Divine Scripture, is denoted charity; kings<sup>1</sup> are clad in it and use it. The soul says<sup>2</sup> that this flowery bed is hung with purple, because all virtues, riches and good things are sustained by it, flourish<sup>3</sup> in it and have fruition only in the charity and love of the King of Heaven, without which love the soul could not enjoy this bed and its flowers. And thus all these virtues in the soul are, as it were, hung with the love of God, as with a substance which preserves them well; and they are, as it were, bathed in love,<sup>4</sup> because all and each of them are ever enkindling the soul with love for God, and in all things and works they are moved by love to greater love of God. This is to be hung with purple. This is well expressed in the Divine Songs; for there it is said that the seat or bed that Solomon made for himself he made of the woods of Libanus, and the pillars of silver, the couch of gold and the hangings<sup>5</sup> of purple; and it says that he ordered it all by means of charity.<sup>6</sup> For the virtues and gifts<sup>7</sup> which God places in the bed of the soul, which are denoted by the woods of Libanus, and the pillars of silver, have their couch and resting-place of love, which is the gold,<sup>8</sup> for, as we have said, the virtues are grounded and preserved in love; and all of them, by means of the charity of God and of the soul, are ordered and practised, as we have just said. And she says that this bed is likewise<sup>9</sup>

### Builded in peace,

8. She here sets down the fourth excellence<sup>10</sup> of this bed, which depends in order upon the third, that has just been mentioned; for the third was perfect love, the property whereof is to cast out all fear, as says Saint John;<sup>11</sup> and from this issues the perfect peace of the soul,<sup>12</sup> which is the fourth property of this bed, as we said. For the better understanding of this it must be known that each of the virtues is of itself peaceful, meek and strong; and consequently in the soul that possesses them are produced these three effects, namely: peace, meekness and strength. And because this bed is flowery, composed of the

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'princes and kings.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'And therefore the soul says.'

<sup>3</sup> [Or 'flower.'] Ej, G, Sg omit: 'flourish in it.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'as it were hung in the love of God.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit., subida*, 'the going up,' as in D.V.]

<sup>6</sup> Canticles iii, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Bz omits: 'and gifts.'

<sup>8</sup> S: 'and resting-place of gold, which is the love.'

<sup>9</sup> S: 'And she likewise says that this bed is.'

<sup>10</sup> A: 'the fourth difference.' S begins: 'It is the fourth excellence.'

<sup>11</sup> 1 St. John iv, 18. All the MSS. have: 'as says Saint Paul.'

<sup>12</sup> Jaén omits: 'from this' [and is therefore not quite clear]. Ej, G: 'was perfect love, and from this, as says Saint Paul, issues...' S: 'was perfect love, and from perfect love, as says Saint Paul, issues...'

flowers of virtues, as we have said, which are all peaceful, meek and strong, hence it comes to pass that the bed is builded in peace, and the soul is peaceful, meek and strong; which are three properties that can be attacked in no war, whether of world, devil or flesh. And the virtues keep the soul so peaceful and secure that it seems to her that she is wholly builded in peace. And she describes the fifth property of this flowering bed, which, besides what has been said, is likewise<sup>1</sup>

### **Crowned with a thousand shields of gold.**

9. The which shields are here the virtues and gifts of the soul, which, although, as we have said, they are the flowers, etc., of this bed, serve it likewise as a crown and prize, for its work in having gained them. And not only so, but they likewise serve it as a defence, and as strong shields against the vices which by the practice of them it conquered; wherefore this flowery bed of the Bride<sup>2</sup> (that is, the virtues, the crown and the defence)<sup>3</sup> is crowned with them as with the prize of the Bride and defended by them as by a shield. And she says they are of gold, to denote the great worth of these virtues. This very thing was said by the Bride in the Songs in other words, in this wise: 'Behold the bed of Solomon, how threescore mighty men of the most valiant of Israel are about it; the sword of each upon his thigh<sup>4</sup> as a defence against the fears of night.'<sup>5</sup> And she says that there are a thousand of them,<sup>6</sup> in order to denote the multitude of the virtues, graces and gifts wherewith God endows the soul in this estate; for He too used the same term in order to signify the number of the virtues of the Bride, which cannot be numbered, saying: 'Like the tower of David is thy neck, which is builded with defences; a thousand shields hang upon it, and all the arms of mighty men.'<sup>7</sup>

### **ANNOTATION FOR THE FOLLOWING STANZA**

**B**UT the soul that reaches this point<sup>8</sup> of perfection is not content to magnify and praise the excellences of her Beloved,<sup>9</sup> the Son of God, nor to sing and give thanks for the favours that she receives in Him and the delights which she enjoys in Him, but relates also that

<sup>1</sup> S: 'The fifth property of this flowering bed, beyond what has been said, is explained in the line following as being . . .'

<sup>2</sup> G, Sg: 'but likewise, as strong shields against the vices, the virtues are a crown and defence, which [vices] it conquered by the practice thereof, and therefore this flowery bed of the Bride . . .'

<sup>3</sup> Av, Bz omit this parenthesis.

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'upon his hand.'

<sup>5</sup> Canticles iii, 7.

<sup>6</sup> S: 'And the Bride says here in this line that there are a thousand shields.'

<sup>7</sup> Canticles iv, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'this estate.'

<sup>9</sup> Ej, G, Sg have 'grandeurs' for 'excellences' and omit 'the Son of God.'

which He does to other souls; for both these things the soul is able to see in this blessed union of love. Wherefore, praising Him and giving Him thanks for the said favours<sup>1</sup> which He grants to other souls, the soul recites this stanza.

## STANZA XXV

**In the track of<sup>2</sup> thy footprint    The young girls<sup>3</sup> run along by the way.<sup>4</sup>**

**At the touch of a spark, at the spiced wine,    Flows forth the Divine balsam.**

## EXPOSITION

2. In this stanza the Bride praises the Beloved for three favours which devout souls receive from Him, whereby they are the more incited<sup>5</sup> and exalted to love God; of these, having experienced them in this estate, she here makes mention. The first, she says, is sweetness which He gives them of Himself, and which is of such efficacy that it makes them to run very quickly upon the way of perfection. The second is a visit of love whereby they are suddenly enkindled in love. The third is abundance of charity infused into them, wherewith they are inebriated after such manner that their spirit is as greatly exalted with this inebriation as with the visit of love, so that they send forth praises to God, together with the delectable affections of love, saying as follows:

**In the track of thy footprint**

3. The footprint is the trace of Him Whose the footprint is, whereby the soul goes tracking and seeking out Him that made it. The sweetness and knowledge concerning Himself which God gives to the soul that seeks Him is the trace and footprint whereby it knows and seeks Him increasingly. Wherefore the soul says here to the Word<sup>6</sup> its Spouse: 'In the track of Thy footprint'—that is, in the traces of sweetness which Thou imprintest upon them and wherewith Thou inspirest them, and in the fragrance of Thyself which Thou scatterest—

**The young girls<sup>7</sup> run along by the way.<sup>8</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> S: 'and magnifying the many favours.'

<sup>2</sup> See p. 182, n. 8, above.

<sup>3</sup> Bg, Sg: 'The youths.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G: 'The youths discover [or "reveal"] the way.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'the more enamoured.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'Wherefore the soul here says to the Word, the Son of God.'

<sup>7</sup> A, Bg: 'The youths.'    <sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'The youths discover [or "reveal"] the way.'

4. This is to say that devout souls, with the youthful strength which they have received from the sweetness of Thy footprint, 'run along'—that is, run in many places and after many manners (for this is the meaning of the phrase)<sup>1</sup>, each one in the place and after the manner which God grants to it, according to its spirit and to the estate which it has reached, by means of a great variety of spiritual works and exercises, along the road of eternal life, which is evangelical perfection, on the which road they meet the Beloved in union of love after attaining detachment of the spirit from all things. This sweetness and this trace of Himself which God leaves in the soul lighten it<sup>2</sup> greatly and make it to run after Him; for then the work done by the soul itself towards its journey along this road counts for very little or nothing;<sup>3</sup> rather it is moved and attracted by this Divine footprint of God, not only to set forth, but to run along that road after many manners, as we have said. Wherefore the Bride in the Songs entreated the Spouse for this Divine attraction,<sup>4</sup> saying: *Trahe me: post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum.*<sup>5</sup> That is: Draw me after Thee and we will run to the fragrance of Thine ointments. And, after He has given her this Divine fragrance, she says: *In odorem unguentorum tuorum currimus: adolescentulæ dilexerunt te nimis.*<sup>6</sup> Which is to say: At the fragrance of Thine ointments we run; the young girls loved Thee greatly. And David says: 'I ran the way of Thy commandments when Thou didst enlarge my heart.'<sup>7</sup>

**At the touch of a spark, at the spiced wine, Flows forth the Divine balsam.**

5. In the first two lines we have explained how souls in the track of the footprint of the Beloved run along by the way by means of exercises and outward works; now in these last lines the soul describes the exercise which these souls perform inwardly with the will, moved by two other favours and inward visits which the Beloved grants them, which she here calls the touch of a spark and spiced wine; and the inward exercise of the will which results from these two visits and is caused by them she calls the flowings forth of Divine balsam. With respect to the first point, it must be known that this touch of a spark

<sup>1</sup> [See p. 91, n. 2, above.]

<sup>2</sup> A, B, Bg: 'gladden it.' Ej, G, Sg: 'alleviate it.'

<sup>3</sup> Av: '... this road is [done] very gradually or not at all.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G: 'this Divine prayer.'

<sup>5</sup> Canticles i, 2-3.

<sup>7</sup> Psalm cxviii, 32 [A.V., cxix, 32].

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

which she mentions here is a most subtle touch which the Beloved inflicts upon the soul at times, even when she is least expecting it,<sup>1</sup> so that her heart is enkindled in the fire of love just as if a spark of fire<sup>2</sup> had flown out and kindled it. Then, with great rapidity, as when one suddenly awakens, the will is enkindled in loving, desiring, praising, giving thanks, doing reverence, esteeming and praying to God with savour of love. These things she calls the flowings forth of Divine balsam, which, at the touch of the sparks, issue forth from the Divine love<sup>3</sup> which struck the spark, which is the Divine balsam, that comforts and heals the soul with its fragrance and substance.

6. Concerning this Divine touch the Bride speaks in the Songs after this manner: *Dilectus meus misit manum suam per foramen, et venter meus intremuit ad tactum ejus.*<sup>4</sup> Which is to say: My Beloved put his hand through the opening and my bowels were moved at his touch. The touch of the Beloved is that touch of love which, as we here say, is inflicted upon the soul; the hand is the favour which He grants it therein; the opening whereby this hand has entered is the manner<sup>5</sup> and mode and degree of perfection<sup>6</sup> which the soul possesses; for in this wise is the touch wont to be heavier or lighter according to this manner or that of the spiritual quality of the soul. The moving of the bowels whereof she speaks is that of the will whereupon the said touch is inflicted; and the moving thereof is the rising within her of her desires and affections towards God, the desiring, loving and praising of Him, and the other things whereof we have spoken, which are the flowings forth of balsam produced by this touch, even as we said.

### The spiced wine.

7. This spiced wine is another and far greater favour<sup>7</sup> which God grants at times to souls that have made progress, inebriating them in the Holy Spirit with a wine of love that is sweet, delectable and strong, for the which cause she calls it spiced wine. For even as such wine is prepared<sup>8</sup> with many and divers spices that are fragrant and strong, so

<sup>1</sup> Sg: '... is a most subtle touch; at times when she is least expecting it the Beloved inflicts it upon the soul.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'a spark of living fire.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'the burning Divine love.'

<sup>4</sup> Canticles v, 4.

<sup>5</sup> [On the word-play here, see p. 93, n. 2, above.]

<sup>6</sup> S: 'is the manner and way and perfection, at least, the degree thereof.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej: 'which are the flowings forth of the balsam produced by this touch, even as we say. With respect to the second [part of the line], this is another and far greater kind of favour.'

<sup>8</sup> [Cf. p. 93, n. 3, above.] Sg: 'For even as the spiced wine is spiced and prepared.' Ej: 'For even as the spiced wine is prepared.'

this love, which is the love that God gives to those that are already perfect, is prepared and made ready in their souls, and spiced with the virtues which the soul has already gained. Seasoned with these precious spices, this love infuses into the soul such strength and abundance of sweet inebriation,<sup>1</sup> in the visits that God makes to her, that with its great efficacy and strength it causes her to send forth to God these emissions or outflowings,<sup>2</sup> wherein she praises, loves and reverences Him, and so forth, as we are saying here, and this with wondrous desires to work and<sup>3</sup> suffer for Him.

8. And it must be known that this favour of sweet inebriation<sup>4</sup> passes not as quickly as the spark, for it is of greater duration. The spark touches and is gone,<sup>5</sup> though its effect lasts for some time and occasionally for a very long time, but the spiced wine and its effect are both accustomed to last long,<sup>6</sup> and this, as I say, is love's sweetness in the soul. Sometimes it lasts for a day, or for two days; at other times, for many days, though not always at the same degree of intensity, since it weakens or increases, and the soul is unable to control it. Sometimes, when the soul has done nothing to produce it, it feels this sweet inebriation of its spirit and the enkindling<sup>7</sup> of this Divine wine,<sup>8</sup> within its inmost substance,<sup>9</sup> even as David says in these words: 'My heart grew hot within me and in my meditation fire will kindle.'<sup>10</sup> Sometimes the flowings forth of this inebriation of love last for as long as the inebriation; at other times, although the inebriation persists in the soul, it does so without the flowings forth aforementioned, and these, when they occur, are of greater or less intensity, according as the inebriation is of greater or less intensity. But the flowings forth or the effects of the spark habitually last longer than the spark itself; it leaves them in the soul, and they are more ardent than those which come from the inebriation, for at times this Divine spark leaves the soul consuming and burning away in love.

9. And, as we have spoken of wine that has been prepared by fermentation, it will be good<sup>11</sup> at this point to note briefly<sup>12</sup> the difference

<sup>1</sup> Bg: 'Spiced with the virtues, this love gives them strength of sweet inebriation.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, S: 'or inebriations.' G: 'or envyings.' Ej omits: 'or outflowings.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej omits: 'work and.'

<sup>4</sup> S: 'that this sweet inebriation and favour which He works within her.' Ej, G, Sg have 'delectable' for 'sweet.'

<sup>5</sup> A: 'passes not as quickly as the spark touches and is gone.'

<sup>6</sup> S has: '[for 'for a very . . . last long']' the spiced wine is wont to last rather longer and its effect a long time.'

<sup>7</sup> Sg: 'the inebriation.'

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'its last substance.'

<sup>11</sup> Sg, S: 'well' for 'good.'

<sup>8</sup> S: 'of this Divine love.'

<sup>10</sup> Psalm xxxviii, 4 [A.V., xxxix, 3].

<sup>12</sup> Ej, G: 'it will be well here to speak briefly of.'

between fermented wine, which is called old,<sup>1</sup> and new wine, which will be the same as that between old and new lovers,<sup>2</sup> and will provide a little instruction for spiritual persons. In new wine the lees have not yet been thrown off, and are not settled, wherefore the wine ferments, and its goodness and worth cannot be known until it has well settled on the lees and the fermentation has ceased.<sup>3</sup> Until that time there is great likelihood of its going bad; it has a rough and sharp taste, and to drink much of it is bad for the drinker; its strength is chiefly in the lees.<sup>4</sup> In old wine the lees are digested and settled, so that there is no longer any fermentation going on in it as there is in new wine; it is quite evidently good, and quite safe from going bad, for that fermentation and bubbling which might cause it to do harm is all over; and thus well fermented wine very rarely goes bad or is spoiled. It has a pleasant flavour, and the strength is in the substance of the wine and no longer in the taste, wherefore a draught of it gives the drinker good health and makes him strong.

10. New lovers are compared to new wine: these are they that are beginning to serve God, for the fermentations of the wine of their love are taking place wholly without, in their senses, since they have not yet settled on the lees of weak and imperfect sense, and the strength of their love resides only in its sweetness. These lovers ordinarily derive the strength to work from sweetness of sense, and by this sweetness they are moved, so that such love as theirs cannot be trusted until its fermentations and coarse tastes of sense are over. For, even as these fermentations and heats of sense can incline the soul to good and perfect love and serve it as a good means thereto, when the lees of its imperfection have settled, even so it is very easy in these beginnings, when these tastes are still new, for the wine of love to fail and for the fervour and sweetness<sup>5</sup> of new things to be spoiled. And these new lovers always have yearnings and fatigues caused by love, which come from the senses; it is meet for them to temper their draught,<sup>6</sup> for, if they are very active while the wine is still fermenting,<sup>7</sup> their natures will be ruined, with these yearnings and fatigues of love—namely, of

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'spiced' for 'old.'

<sup>2</sup> S reads: 'new wines and old' for 'old and new lovers' [destroying the sense].

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'until it has well digested the lees and fury of them.']

<sup>4</sup> S omits this sentence.

<sup>5</sup> A: 'the sweetness and favour.' Sg: 'the fervour.' Ej, G: 'for the wine of love to be corrupted and spoiled in the fervour for new things.'

<sup>6</sup> Av: 'to temper the sweetness.' [There are various other readings, of which this alone preserves any sense.]

<sup>7</sup> Av, Sg: 'while the wine still has strength.'

the new wine, which, as we said, is rough and sharp, and not sweetened as yet by perfect preparation, after which these yearnings of love will cease,<sup>1</sup> as we shall shortly say.

11. This same comparison is made by the Wise Man in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, where he says: 'The new friend is as new wine; it shall grow old and thou shalt drink it with pleasure.'<sup>2</sup> Wherefore old lovers, which are they that are practised and proved in the service of the Spouse, are like old wine which has settled on the lees, and has not those fermentations of the senses, or those fires and storms of fermentation<sup>3</sup> from without; the sweetness of the wine of love can be tasted now that it is substantially fermented, and has not that savour<sup>4</sup> of sense as has the love of new lovers, but is settled within the soul in the substance and savour of the spirit and truth<sup>5</sup> in its works. And such souls desire not to cling to those savours and fermentations of the senses, neither do they desire to experience them, lest they suffer disgust and weariness; for he that gives rein to the desire for any pleasure of sense<sup>6</sup> has perforce many times to suffer pains and displeasures of sense and of spirit. Wherefore since these old lovers lack the spiritual sweetness which has its roots in sense,<sup>7</sup> they have no more yearnings or pains of love in sense and spirit; and therefore it is a marvel if these old friends fail God,<sup>8</sup> for they are already far above that which might make them fail, namely, above sensuality, and in them the wine of love is not only fermented and purged of its lees, but is also (as is said in the line) seasoned with the spices, which, as we said, are virtues in perfection, and allow it not to go bad like new wine. For this reason the old friend is of great esteem in the sight of God and thus the author of Ecclesiasticus says of him: 'Forsake not the old friend, for the new will not be like to him.'<sup>9</sup> In this wine of love, then, well proved and spiced in the soul, the Divine Beloved<sup>10</sup> produces the Divine inebriation which we have mentioned, in the strength whereof the soul causes sweet and delectable outflowings to go forth to God. And so the sense of the last lines is as follows: At the touch of the

<sup>1</sup> Ej: 'and not sweetened nor perfectly digestible until these yearnings of love cease.'

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiasticus ix, 15 [A.V., ix, 10].

<sup>3</sup> ['Storms' is literally 'furies.']

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'that fervour.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'spirit and fervour.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej: 'for he that gives rein to any pleasure of the sensual appetite.' G: 'for he that gives rein to the pleasure, whatever it be, of the sensual appetite.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G: 'which has furies [or 'storms'] in the sense.'

<sup>8</sup> S: 'in sense or spirit, and thus it is a marvel if they fail God.'

<sup>9</sup> Ecclesiasticus ix, 14 [A.V., ix, 10].

<sup>10</sup> G, Sg: 'Divine love.'

spark wherewith Thou awakenest my soul, and at the spiced wine wherewith Thou lovingly inebriatest me, my soul sends to Thee its outflowings of the movements and acts of love occasioned by Thee within it.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

So, then, we shall understand the happy soul to be in this flowery bed, where all these things aforementioned and many more come to pass, wherein for a couch<sup>1</sup> she has the Spouse, the Son of God, and for covering and hangings the charity and love of the same Spouse. In such wise can she of a surety pronounce the words of the Bride, who says: 'His left hand under my head.'<sup>2</sup> Wherefore it will be possible to say with truth that this soul is here clothed in God and bathed in Divinity. And, not superficially, but in the inward parts of her spirit, being filled with Divine delights, and having the fullness<sup>3</sup> of the spiritual waters of life, she experiences that which David says of those that have drawn near to God, namely: 'They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house, and of the torrent<sup>4</sup> of Thy delight shalt Thou give them to drink; for with Thee is the fountain of life.'<sup>5</sup> What fullness, then, will be this that is in the being of the soul, since the draught that they give it is nothing less than a torrent of delight, which torrent is the Holy Spirit; for, as Saint John says, He is the resplendent river of living water that proceeds from the seat of God and of the Lamb.<sup>6</sup> The waters of this river, since they are the inmost love of God, flow into the inmost soul<sup>7</sup> and give her to drink this torrent of love which, as we say, is the spirit of her Spouse<sup>8</sup> which is infused into her in this union, and therefore with great abundance of love she sings this stanza.

<sup>1</sup> [*reclinatorio*: the word used in Chap. xxiv, § 7, above.]

<sup>2</sup> Canticles ii, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Jaén. B, Bg: 'being clothed in delights of wine [*de vino*, for "divine"—*divino*], having the fullness . . .'. The other authorities also have *revestida* ['clothed'] for *revertida* ['filled,' or, more exactly, 'having overflowed'], except Ej and G, which reads *recocida* [best translated 'consumed'].

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'of the current.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm xxxv, 9 [A.V., xxxvi, 8-9].

<sup>6</sup> Apocalypse xxii, 1.

<sup>7</sup> G: 'flow most abundantly into the soul.'

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'is the Holy Spirit her Spouse.'

## STANZA XXVI

**In the inner cellar, of my Beloved have I drunk, And, when I  
went forth over all this meadow,  
Then knew I naught And lost the flock which I followed  
aforetime.**

## EXPOSITION

2. In this stanza the soul describes the sovereign favour which God has granted her by gathering her into the depth of His love, which is the union or transformation of love in God; and she notes two effects<sup>1</sup> which she has derived therefrom—namely, forgetfulness and withdrawal from all the things of the world, and the mortification of all its tastes and desires.

**In the inner cellar,**

3. In order that I might say aught concerning this cellar, and explain that which the soul desires to say or denote by it, it would be needful that the Holy Spirit should take my hand and move my pen. This cellar whereof the soul here speaks is the last and most intimate degree<sup>2</sup> of love to which the soul may attain in this life, wherefore she calls it the inner cellar—that is to say, the innermost. From this it follows that there are others less interior, which are the degrees of love whereby the soul rises to this, the last of all. And we may say that there are seven of these degrees or cellars of love,<sup>3</sup> all of which the soul comes to possess when she possesses in perfection the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, in the manner wherein she is able to receive them. And thus, when the soul attains to perfect possession of the spirit of fear, she has likewise in perfection the spirit of love, since that fear, which is the last of the seven gifts, is filial,<sup>4</sup> and the perfect fear<sup>5</sup> of a son proceeds from the perfect love of a father. Hence, when<sup>6</sup> the Divine Scripture desires to call a man perfect in charity,<sup>7</sup> it speaks of him as fearing God. Wherefore Isaias, prophesying the perfection of Christ, said: *Replebit*

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'into the inner place of His love, which is union or transformation in God, and she relates two things, and these are two effects, etc.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'most narrow degree.'] G, Sg: 'strange degree.' Ej: 'intimate degree.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G abbreviate thus: '... the degrees of love; and these cellars of love are seven.'

<sup>4</sup> Av: 'is most filial.'

<sup>5</sup> G, Sg: 'the perfect love.'

<sup>6</sup> Av modifies and adds: 'When fear is most perfect, love is most perfect, and thus when ...'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G: 'in holiness.'

*eum spiritus timoris Domini.*<sup>1</sup> Which signifies: He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of God. Saint Luke also described the holy Simeon as full of fear, saying: *Erat vir justus, et timoratus.*<sup>2</sup> And this is also true of many others.

4. It must be known that many souls attain to the first cellars and enter therein, each according to the perfection of love which he possesses, but few in this life attain to this last and innermost perfection, for in this there comes to pass that perfect union with God which they call the Spiritual Marriage, whereof the soul speaks in this place. And that which God communicates to the soul in this most intimate union is completely ineffable, so that naught can be said thereof, even as naught can be said concerning God Himself which may describe Him; for it is God Himself Who communicates this to the soul and transforms her into Himself with marvellous glory, so that they are both as<sup>3</sup> we should say the window is with the sun's ray, or coal with the fire, or the light of the stars with that of the sun—yet less essentially and completely so than will come to pass in the next life. And thus, in order to describe that which she receives from God in that cellar of union,<sup>4</sup> the soul says naught else, nor do I believe that she could say aught more appropriate to express some part thereof, than the following line:

**Of my Beloved have I drunk,**

5. For, even as a draught is diffused and shed through all the members and veins of the body, even so is this communication from God diffused substantially in the entire soul, or, to express it better, the soul is more nearly transformed into God, according to which transformation the soul drinks of its God according to its substance and its spiritual faculties. For, according to the understanding, it drinks wisdom and knowledge; according to the will, it drinks sweetest love; and, according to the memory, it drinks recreation and delight in the remembrance and sense of glory. With respect to the first point, that the soul receives and drinks delight substantially, the Bride herself says this, in the Songs, after this manner: *Anima mea liquefacta est, ut sponsus locutus est.*<sup>5</sup> That is: My soul delighted when the Spouse spake. The speaking of the Spouse signifies here<sup>6</sup> His communicating Himself to the soul.

<sup>1</sup> Isaias xi, 3 [A.V., xi, 2].

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke ii, 25.

<sup>3</sup> S: 'transforming her with marvellous glory. And in this estate they are both in one, as . . .

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, S: 'cellar of wine.' Bg: 'cellar of good.'

<sup>5</sup> Canticles v, 6.

<sup>6</sup> S: ' . . . when the Spouse spake to her, the which speaking here signifies.'

6. And that the understanding drinks wisdom is declared in the same book by the Bride, where, desiring to attain to this kiss of union and entreating the Spouse for it, she says: 'There Thou shalt teach me (namely, wisdom and knowledge in love); and I will give Thee a draught of spiced wine'<sup>1</sup>—that is to say, of my love spiced with Thine,<sup>2</sup> or, in other words, transformed into Thine.

7. With respect to the third point, which is that the will drinks there of love, the Bride says this also in the said Book of the Songs, in these words: 'He introduced me into the secret cellar and ordained charity in me'; which is as much as to say: He gave me to drink love introduced into His love, or more clearly and properly speaking: He ordained in me His charity, accommodating His own<sup>3</sup> charity to me and making it mine: this is the drinking by the soul of the very love of its Beloved, which its Beloved infuses into it.<sup>4</sup>

8. Here it is to be known, with respect to the saying of some that the will cannot love, save what the understanding first understands, that this has to be understood after a natural manner; for in the way of nature it is impossible to love if one understands not first that which one is to love; but in the supernatural way God can readily infuse love and increase it without infusing or increasing distinct knowledge, as is given to be understood in the passage quoted. And this is the experience of many spiritual persons, who oftentimes find themselves burning in the love of God without having a more distinct knowledge of Him than aforetime; for they can understand little and love much, and they can understand much and love little. But habitually those spiritual persons who have not a very excellent understanding concerning God are wont to excel in will; and infused faith suffices them in the stead of intellectual knowledge; by means of which faith God infuses into them charity, and increases it within them, together with the act thereof, which is to love more, even though their knowledge be not increased, as we have said. And thus the will can drink of love without the understanding drinking anew of knowledge, although in the case of which we are speaking, wherein the soul says that she drank of her Beloved, inasmuch as there is union in the inner cellar, which is according to the three faculties of the soul, as we have said, all of them drink together.

9. And with respect to the fourth point—namely, that the soul drinks of its Beloved there according to the memory—it is clear that

<sup>1</sup> Canticles viii, 2.

<sup>2</sup> S omits the words which follow ('or . . . Thine').

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'own.'

<sup>4</sup> Sg: 'this is the drinking by the soul of its Beloved.' Ej, G omit: 'this is . . . into it.'

the soul is enlightened with the light of the understanding in remembering the good things which it is possessing and enjoying in the union of its Beloved.

10. This Divine draught<sup>1</sup> so greatly deifies and exalts the soul and immerses it in God that when it goes forth—

### **When I went forth**

11. That is to say, this favour has completely passed away,<sup>2</sup> for although the soul be for ever in this high estate of marriage<sup>3</sup> after He has placed it therein, yet it is not for ever in actual union according to the said faculties, although it is so according to the substance of the soul. But in this substantial union of the soul the faculties are also very frequently<sup>4</sup> in union, and drink in this cellar; the understanding by knowledge, the will by love, etc. So, when the soul now says 'When I went forth,' she understands not this of the essential or substantial<sup>5</sup> union which she now possesses, which is the estate aforementioned, but refers to the union of the faculties, which is not continuous in this life, neither can be so. She says, then, that when she went forth

### **Over all this meadow,**

12. That is to say, over all this expanse of the world,

### **Then knew I naught**

13. The reason is that that draught of the highest wisdom<sup>6</sup> of God which there she drank makes her forget all the things of the world, and it seems to the soul that its former knowledge, and even the knowledge of the whole world, is pure ignorance by comparison with that knowledge. And in order to understand this better it must be known that the most usual cause of this ignorance of the soul things of the world, when it is in this estate, is that it has been informed by supernatural knowledge,<sup>7</sup> beside which all the natural and political knowledge of the world is not so much knowledge as ignorance. Wherefore the soul that is led into this highest knowledge knows thereby that all that other knowledge which has naught in common with this knowledge is not knowledge but ignorance; and that there is no knowledge to be had from it; and the soul declares the truth of the saying of the

<sup>1</sup> Bg has: 'This Divine wisdom,' and omits the following words: 'deifies and.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'That is to say, when this favour had just passed away.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'in this spiritual estate.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'or substantial.'

<sup>7</sup> Av, Bz: 'supernatural essence.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G: 'very perfectly.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G: 'highest sweetness.'

Apostle, namely, that that which is greatest wisdom in the sight of men is foolishness in God's sight.<sup>1</sup> And therefore the Bride says that she knew naught after drinking of that Divine wisdom; and this truth—namely, that the wisdom of men and of the whole world is pure ignorance, and that it merits unknowing—cannot be known save when God grants to the soul the favour of being Himself within it,<sup>2</sup> communicating His wisdom to it, and strengthening it with this draught of love so that it may see it clearly, according as Solomon says, in these words: 'This is the vision that was seen and spoken of by the man with whom God is, who, being strengthened by the dwelling of God within him, said: "I am most foolish above all men, and the wisdom of men is not with me."' <sup>3</sup> This is because the soul is in that exceeding high wisdom of God and therefore the lowly wisdom of men is ignorance to it; for the natural sciences themselves, and the very works that are done by God, are as ignorance compared with knowing God, for, where God is not known, naught is known. Wherefore the high places of God are ignorance and foolishness to men, as Saint Paul says likewise.<sup>4</sup> Hence the divinely wise and the worldly wise are each ignorant in the other's estimation; for the latter cannot apprehend the wisdom and science of God, neither can the former apprehend those of the world; inasmuch as the wisdom of the world, as we have said, is ignorance with respect to the wisdom of God, and that of God with respect to that of the world.

14. But over and above this, that deification and exaltation of the mind in God wherein the soul is as if enraptured, immersed in love and wholly one with God,<sup>5</sup> allows it not to take notice of anything soever in the world; and it is withdrawn not only from all other things, but even from itself, and is annihilated, as though it were transformed and dissolved in love, which transformation consists in passing from itself to the Beloved. And thus the Bride in the Songs, after having treated of this her transformation of love in the Beloved, describes this unknowing which was hers, in this word: *Nescivi*; which means: I knew not.<sup>6</sup> The soul in such a condition is in a certain manner as Adam was in the condition of innocence, when he knew not what evil was; for it is so innocent that it understands not evil nor judges aught as evil; and it will hear things that are very evil, and will see them with

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians iii, 19.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'save by this favour of God's being in the soul.'] S: 'save by this truth of God's being in the soul.'

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs xxx, 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> S: 'and made one God.'

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Canticles vi, 11 [A.V., vi, 12].

its eyes, and will be unable to understand that they are so,<sup>1</sup> because it has no habit of evil whereby to judge it, God having rooted out its imperfect habits and ignorance (including the evil of sin), with the perfect habit of true wisdom; and thus, with respect to this also, it 'knew naught.'

15. The soul in such case will intervene little in things of others, since it remembers not even its own things. For the Spirit of God has this characteristic in the soul wherein He dwells, that He forthwith inclines it towards ignorance and unwillingness to know the things of others, especially things that are not to its profit. For the Spirit of God is recollected within the soul itself, and turns toward it, rather that He may draw it forth from extraneous things than in order to lead it among them. And thus the soul remains in a complete unknowing with respect to the things that it knew formerly.

16. It is not to be understood that, even if the soul continues in this state of unknowing, it loses therein the habits of the acquired sciences<sup>2</sup> which it had; it is rather that they are perfected with that most perfect habit—namely, the habit of supernatural science—which has been infused within it, although these habits no longer dominate the soul in such a way as to make it necessary that knowledge should come through them, albeit there is no obstacle to this happening occasionally. For in this union of Divine wisdom these habits are united with the highest wisdom of the other sciences,<sup>3</sup> just as, when a small light unites with another that is great, it is the greater that overwhelms the lesser and gives light, and the smaller is not lost, but rather is perfected, although it gives not the chief light. And this, I suppose, will be the position in Heaven, where the habits of acquired knowledge which the just bring there will not be destroyed, though they will be of no great importance to the just,<sup>4</sup> for they will know more in the Divine wisdom than these habits can teach them.

17. But the kinds of knowledge and the particular forms of things and acts of the imagination, and every other apprehension that has form and figure, are all lost and no longer known in that absorption of love, and this for two reasons. First, because, as the soul is actually absorbed and immersed in that draught of love, it cannot actually be in aught else neither take notice thereof. Secondly and chiefly, because

<sup>1</sup> S: 'to understand what they are.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg: 'the acquired essences.'

<sup>3</sup> Sg: 'with the highest wisdom of God, through which the soul chiefly understands the virtues of the other sciences.' So, too, Ej and G, except that they read 'truths' for 'virtues.'

<sup>4</sup> S: 'to them.'

that transformation in God makes it conform to the simplicity and purity of God (whereinto enters no imaginary figure or form) after such manner as to leave it clean and pure and empty of all forms and figures which it had aforetime, purged and enlightened with simple contemplation. It is like the sun upon a window, infusing itself therein, and making it bright, so that all the stains and spots which formerly appeared upon it are lost from sight; but when the sun departs again the obscurities and stains appear upon it once more. In the soul, however, since the effect of that act of love to some extent remains with it and endures, there likewise endures that unknowing, so that it cannot take note of anything in particular until the affection of that act of love passes.<sup>1</sup> For this act, which has inflamed it and changed it in love, has also annihilated it and destroyed it as to all that which was not love. This agrees with what we said above concerning David, namely: 'For my heart was inflamed and together with it my reins also were changed, and I was dissolved into nothing and I knew naught.'<sup>2</sup> For the reins to be changed by reason of this inflaming of the heart signifies that the soul is changed in God, as to all its desires and operations, into a new manner of life, and that it is destroyed and annihilated, concerning all those old things which it used aforetime; for which reason the Prophet says that he was dissolved into nothing, and that he knew naught, which, as we said, are the two effects caused by the draught from this cellar of God. For not only is all that first knowledge which the soul possessed annihilated, so that everything seems to it as nothing, but likewise all its former life and imperfections are annihilated and renewed in the new man; which is this second effect whereof we are speaking, and which is contained in this line:

**And (I) lost the flock which I followed aforetime.**

18. This signifies that, until the soul attains to this state of perfection whereof we are speaking, however spiritual it may be, there ever remains to it a little flock, as it were, consisting of some of its desires and petty tastes and other of its imperfections—sometimes natural, sometimes spiritual<sup>3</sup>—after which it goes, endeavouring to pasture them while following them and satisfying them. For with respect to the understanding there are wont to remain to such a soul certain imperfections concerning the desire to know. With respect to the will,

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'there likewise . . . act of love passes.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxxii, 21 [A.V., lxxiii, 21-2].

<sup>3</sup> A, B, Bg: 'sometimes spiritual, sometimes temporal.'

such souls permit themselves to be carried away by certain petty tastes and desires of their own. These may be temporal, like the possession of certain small things, preference for one thing over another, and certain kinds of presumption, esteem and punctilio to which they pay heed, and other little things which still reek and savour of the world. Or they may be natural, like food, drink and a taste<sup>1</sup> for this rather than for that, and a choosing and desiring of the best. Or, again, they may be spiritual, like the desire for consolations from God and other irrelevances which I might never cease retailing, which things are wont to cling to spiritual men who are not yet perfect. And, with respect to the memory, there are many varieties of things and cares and irrelevant reflections, which draw the soul after them.

19. Sometimes, again, with respect to the four passions of the soul, there are many useless hopes, joys, griefs and fears, after which the soul goes in pursuit. As to this flock aforesaid, some are attracted by more of such things and others by less; but they continually pursue them, until they enter this inner cellar to drink and lose their flock entirely, becoming, as we have said, wholly turned into love, wherein these flocks—that is, these imperfections of the soul—are consumed more easily than rust<sup>2</sup> and mould upon metals are consumed in the fire. So the soul feels itself to be free from all childish likes and dislikes and follies which it pursued, and it can indeed say: ‘I lost the flock which I followed aforetime.’

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

WITH such great reality<sup>3</sup> of love does God communicate Himself to the soul in this interior union that no affection of a mother who so tenderly caresses her daughter, nor love of a brother, nor affection of a friend is comparable to it. For so great is the tenderness and reality of the love wherewith the boundless Father caresses and exalts this humble and loving soul—oh, marvellous thing and worthy of all awe and wonder!<sup>4</sup>—that in very truth He subjects Himself to it in order to exalt it, as though He were the servant and the soul were His master; and He is as solicitous in granting it favours as though he were the soul’s slave and the soul were His God. So profound is the humility and the sweetness of God! For in this

<sup>1</sup> B, Bg, S: ‘and a liking.’

<sup>2</sup> S: ‘more easily, after the manner wherein rust.’

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: ‘With such great truths.’

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: ‘and exalts this soul, which is a thing worthy of all power and wonder.’

communication of love He renders the soul in some degree that same service which He says in the Gospel that He will render to His elect in Heaven—that is to say that He will gird Himself, and, passing from one to another, will serve them.<sup>1</sup> And even so He is here employed in cherishing and caressing<sup>2</sup> the soul, as is the mother in serving and caressing her child, and nursing it at her own breasts; wherein the soul knows the truth of the saying of Isaias, where he says: ‘To the breast of God you shall be brought and upon His knees shall you be caressed.’<sup>3</sup>

2. What, then, will the feelings of the soul be here among such sovereign favours?<sup>4</sup> How it will melt in love! How thankful will it be when it sees this breast of God opened to it with such wide and sovereign love! Conscious of being set among so many delights, it surrenders itself to Him wholly and gives Him also the breasts of its own will and love, for it feels it passing in its soul, in the same way as the Bride<sup>5</sup> felt it in the Songs, where she speaks with her Spouse after this manner: ‘I to my Beloved and His turning is toward me. Come, my Beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us lodge together in the villages; let us get up early in the morning to the vineyards and see if the vineyard has flourished and if the flowers are bringing forth fruits; if the pomegranates have flourished. There will I give Thee my breasts’<sup>6</sup>—that is, I will employ the delights and strength of my will in the service of Thy love. And as these two surrenders of the soul and God have thus come to pass in this union, she describes them in the following stanza, saying:

### STANZA XXVII

**There he gave me his breast; There he taught me a science  
most delectable;  
And I gave myself to him indeed, reserving nothing; There I  
promised him to be his bride.**

### EXPOSITION

3. In this stanza the Bride describes the surrender which was made upon either side in this spiritual betrothal, namely, that betwixt herself

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xii, 37.

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G: ‘in cherishing, caressing and refreshing.’ Sg: ‘in cherishing, refreshing and caressing.’

<sup>3</sup> Isaias lxvi, 12. S has: ‘and upon His knees will He fondle you.’

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G: ‘such delectable favours.’

<sup>5</sup> S: ‘and feeling it and passing by it thus, says to her Beloved that which the Bride felt.’

<sup>6</sup> Canticles vii, 10–12.

and God; saying that, in that inner cellar of love, they were united through the communication of Himself to her, when He gave her freely the breast of His love, showing her therein wisdom and secrets; and likewise through the communication of herself to Him, when she surrendered herself to Him indeed and wholly, without reserving aught either for herself or for another, and declaring herself His for ever. The line follows:

**There he gave me his breast;**

4. For one to give the breast to another signifies to give that one his love and friendship and to reveal to him his secrets as to a friend. Thus, when the soul says that He gave her His breast there, she means that He communicated to her there His love and His secrets, which God grants to the soul in this estate. Further, there is that which she says also in this line following:

**There he taught me a science most delectable;**

5. The delectable science which she says here that He taught her is mystical theology<sup>1</sup>—the secret science of God,<sup>2</sup> which spiritual men call contemplation—this is most delectable, since it is science through love, the which love is its master and that which makes it to be wholly delectable. And inasmuch as God communicates to the soul this science and knowledge in the love wherewith He communicates Himself to her, it is delectable to her understanding, since it is a science which pertains thereto; and likewise it is delectable to her will, since it consists in love, which pertains to the will.<sup>3</sup> She says next:

**And I gave myself to him indeed, reserving nothing;**

6. In that sweet draught of God, wherein, as we have said, the soul is immersed in God, it surrenders itself, most willingly and with great sweetness, to Him wholly, desiring to be wholly His and never again to have aught in itself that is alien from Him. God grants it, in the said union, the purity and the perfection which are necessary for this; for, inasmuch as He transforms the soul into Himself, He makes it to be wholly His and empties it of all that it possessed and that was alien from God. Wherefore the soul is indeed completely given up to God, reserving naught, not only according to its will, but also according to

<sup>1</sup> S begins: 'This delectable science is mystical theology.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'which is very delectable and is the secret science of God.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'because it is a science that pertains to Him, and is delectable to the will, since it consists in love, which pertains to the will.'

its works, even as God has given Himself<sup>1</sup> freely to the soul. So these two wills<sup>2</sup> are surrendered, satisfied and given up the one to the other, so that neither shall fail the other, as in the faithfulness and stability of a betrothal. Wherefore the Bride adds these words:

**There I promised him to be his bride.**

7. For even as a maiden that is betrothed sets not her love upon another than her spouse, nor directs her thoughts<sup>3</sup> or her actions to any other, even so the soul in this estate has no longer any affections of the will or acts of knowledge of the understanding, nor any care or action which is not wholly turned to God, together with its desires. It is, as it were, Divine, deified, so that<sup>4</sup> in even its first movements it has naught whereto the will of God is opposed, in so far as it can understand. For even as in an imperfect soul its first movements at least, according to the understanding and according to the will and memory and desires, are as a general rule<sup>5</sup> inclined to evil<sup>6</sup> and also to imperfections, even so, the soul in this estate, according to the understanding, will and memory and desires,<sup>7</sup> in its first movements, is as a general rule moved and inclined to God, through the great help and stability which it already has in God and through its perfect conversion to that which is good. All this David clearly explained when he said, speaking of his soul in this estate: 'Shall not my soul perchance be subject to God? Yea, for from Him cometh my salvation, and He is my God and my Saviour; my Receiver, I shall not be any more moved.'<sup>8</sup> By saying: 'my Receiver,' he means that, because his soul is received in God and united in Him, as we say here, he could not be moved against God any more.<sup>9</sup>

8. From what has been said it is to be clearly understood that the soul which has reached this estate of spiritual betrothal knows naught save to love and ever to enjoy the delights of love with the Spouse. For, as it has now reached perfection, the form and being whereof, as Saint Paul says,<sup>10</sup> is love—for the more a soul loves the more perfect is

<sup>1</sup> A, G, Sg insert here: 'wholly.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'both these wills.'

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'her care.']

<sup>4</sup> S: 'It is, as it were, immersed in God, and thus it behaves so that.'

<sup>5</sup> A omits: 'as a general rule.' Jaén, 4v, Bz read as in the texts; the remaining authorities: 'as a rule.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'inclined to evil and also to.'

<sup>7</sup> Sg omits several lines preceding this word. A adds: 'and imperfections.'

<sup>8</sup> Psalm lxi, 2 [A.V., lxii, 1-2].

<sup>9</sup> In Ej and G follows here the word 'Annotation.' S has 'Annotation for the stanza following.' All three omit this heading at the beginning of the next paragraph but one.

<sup>10</sup> Colossians iii, 14.

it in that which it loves—therefore this soul that is now perfect is wholly love, if it may thus be expressed, and all its actions are love and it employs all its faculties and possessions<sup>1</sup> in loving, giving all that it has, like the wise merchant,<sup>2</sup> for this treasure of love which it has found hidden in God. And this treasure is of such great price<sup>3</sup> in His sight that, when the soul sees that its Beloved prizes nothing and is pleased with nothing beside love, it employs everything, in its desire to serve Him perfectly, in the pure love of God. And not only because He wills it thus,<sup>4</sup> but likewise because the love wherein it is united inclines it, in and through all things, to the love of God. For, even as the bee extracts from all plants<sup>5</sup> the honey that is in them, and has no use for them for aught else save for that purpose, even so the soul with great facility extracts the sweetness of love that is in all the things that pass through it; it loves God in each of them,<sup>6</sup> whether pleasant or unpleasant; and being, as it is, informed and protected by love, it has neither feeling nor taste nor knowledge of such things, for, as we have said, the soul knows naught but love, and its pleasure in all things and occupations is ever, as we have said, the delight of the love of God. And to indicate this the soul utters the following stanza.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

SINCE, however, we said that God is pleased with naught save love, it will be well before we expound this stanza to state here the reason for this, which is that all our works and all our labours, though they be as numerous as is possible, are nothing in God's sight, for in them we can give Him nothing, neither can we fulfil His desire, which is solely to exalt the soul. He<sup>7</sup> desires nothing of this for Himself, since He has no need thereof; and thus, if anything pleases Him, it is that the soul may be exalted; and since there is no way wherein He can exalt it so much as by making it equal<sup>8</sup> with Himself, for that reason alone He is pleased when the soul loves Him. For the property of love is to make the lover equal with the object of his love. Wherefore, since its love is now perfect, the soul is called Bride of the Son of

<sup>1</sup> So S. The other authorities have: 'all the possessions of its soul.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew xiii, 45-6.

<sup>3</sup> The MSS., except Jaén, read: 'is so precious.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'because she wills it thus.' S: 'because she employs it thus.'

<sup>5</sup> B, Bg: 'from all flowers.' Bz, Ej, G, Sg: 'from all things.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'it loves God in them.'] Ej: 'it loves Him in them.' Ej, G, Sg add: 'and thus all things induce love in it.'

<sup>7</sup> S: 'Because He.'

<sup>8</sup> S adds: 'after a certain manner.'

God, which signifies equality with Him; in the which equality of friendship all things of both are common to both, as the Spouse Himself said to His disciples, in these words: 'But I have called you friends; for all that I heard of My Father I have manifested to you.'<sup>1</sup> The stanza, then, says:

## STANZA XXVIII

**My soul has employed itself And all my possessions in his service:**

**Now I guard no flock nor have I now other office, For now my exercise is in loving alone.**

### EXPOSITION

2. Inasmuch as the soul has said in the last stanza (or, rather, the Bride has said) that she has given herself wholly to the Spouse, and has reserved naught for herself, she now, in this stanza, sets forth the manner and mode<sup>2</sup> wherein she accomplishes this. She says that her soul and her body and her faculties and all her abilities are occupied, no longer in other things,<sup>3</sup> but in those which pertain to the service of her Spouse.<sup>4</sup> And that for this reason she no longer goes about seeking her own gain, nor pursues her own tastes,<sup>5</sup> nor busies herself in other things, and in intercourse that has naught to do with God, and is alien to Him.<sup>6</sup> And that even with God Himself she has no other style or manner of intercourse save the exercise of love, inasmuch as she has changed and bartered that earlier mode of intercourse which she had with Him into love,<sup>7</sup> as she will now say.

### **My soul has employed itself**

3. In saying that her soul has employed itself, the Bride refers to the surrender of herself which she made to the Beloved in that union of love<sup>8</sup> wherein her soul, with all its faculties, understanding, will and

<sup>1</sup> St. John xv, 15.

<sup>2</sup> S: 'she now, in this stanza to the Beloved, sets forth the manner.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'in the things.'] S: 'in all things.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G: 'and her faculties with all sweetness [*sc.*, are occupied] not in aught else save only in those things which are for the service of her Spouse.' Sg: 'and all her abilities [*sc.*, are occupied] no longer in aught else save in those things which belong to the service of her Spouse.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'her own tastes and appetites.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G: 'and in commerce alien to God.'

<sup>7</sup> A, Bz, S: 'into loving.'

<sup>8</sup> Sg: 'in that surrender of love in the union of love aforementioned.'

memory, was dedicated and subjected<sup>1</sup> to His service. Her understanding she employs in the understanding of those things that pertain most nearly to His service in order to do them; her will, in loving all that pleases God and in having affection of the will for God in all things; and her memory and care in<sup>2</sup> that which pertains to His service and will be most pleasing to Him. And she says further:

**And all my possessions in his service:**

4. By all her possessions she here understands all that pertains to the sensual part of the soul. In this sensual part<sup>3</sup> is included the body with all its senses and faculties,<sup>4</sup> both interior and exterior, and all its natural ability—namely, the four passions, the natural desires, and the other possessions of the soul, all of which things, she says, are now employed in<sup>5</sup> the service of her Beloved, even as is the rational and spiritual part of the soul whereof we have just spoken in the last line. For the body now works according to God; the inward and outward senses are directed towards Him in all their operations; and all the four passions of the soul she likewise keeps bound to God, because she neither has enjoyment save from God,<sup>6</sup> neither has hope in aught save in God, nor fears any save only God, neither does she grieve save according to God; and likewise all her desires and cares are directed to God alone.

5. And all these possessions are now employed in God and directed toward God, in such manner that all the parts thereof which we have described tend,<sup>7</sup> in their first movements, without the soul's being conscious of it, to work in God and for God. For the understanding, the will and the memory go straightway to God;<sup>8</sup> and the affections, the senses, the desires and appetites, hope, joy and all the rest of the soul's possessions are inclined to God from the first moment, even though, as I say, the soul may not realize that it is working for God. Wherefore the soul in such case very frequently works for God, and is intent upon Him and the things that pertain to Him, without thinking or remembering that it is doing aught for Him; for the use and habit which it has acquired in this manner of procedure causes it neither to observe nor to have any care, and even takes from

<sup>1</sup> S omits: 'and subjected.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'and her memory in care for . . .'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, S: 'in the which part.'

<sup>4</sup> B, S: 'with all its faculties.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'all of which she says has now returned to.'

<sup>6</sup> Sg omits: 'because she . . . save from God.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G: 'are moved.'

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G: 'because the understanding moves the will and they go straightway to God.'

it the fervent acts which it was wont to have at the beginning. And since all these possessions are employed in God after the manner aforesaid, the soul must needs likewise have that which it describes in the line following, namely:

**Now I guard no flock**

6. Which is as much as to say: Now I go no longer after my tastes and desires; for, having set them upon God and given them to Him, the soul no longer pastures them nor guards them for herself.<sup>1</sup> And not only does she say that she no longer guards this flock, but she says further:<sup>2</sup>

**Nor have I now other office,**

7. Many offices, and unprofitable ones, has the soul before she goes so far as to make this gift and surrender to the Beloved of herself and of her possessions, wherewith she sought to serve her own desire and that of others; for all the habits<sup>3</sup> of imperfections<sup>4</sup> that she had may be described as so many occupations, the which habits may be likened to the characteristic or office which she had of saying useless things, and also of thinking and acting them, instead of behaving herein as is fitting to the soul's perfection. A soul may also have other desires wherewith it serves the desires of others, such as desires for ostentatious actions, compliments, acts of adulation, paying respect, endeavouring to appear well and giving pleasure to people by what it does, and many other useless things, whereby it tries to please people,<sup>5</sup> employing therein its care and its desire<sup>6</sup> and its work,<sup>7</sup> and, in short, all its possessions. All these offices, she says, she has no longer, because all her words and her thoughts and actions are now of God and are directed toward God, and have no longer the imperfections<sup>8</sup> which they were wont to have. And thus it is as though she were to say: I seek not now to give pleasure to my own desire, nor to that of others, nor do I occupy or busy myself in other useless pastimes<sup>9</sup> or in things of the world.

**For now my exercise is in loving alone.**

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'nor guards them for herself.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'guards it, but that she has no other office.'

<sup>3</sup> G: 'all the acts.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'and many . . . please people.'

<sup>4</sup> Sg: 'habits and imperfections.'

<sup>5</sup> A, B, Bg, S: 'the care for the desire.'

<sup>7</sup> Sg: 'and its work and thought.'

<sup>8</sup> Jaén reads here, by an error, 'the perfections.'

<sup>9</sup> Bz: 'in thoughts or other pastimes which are useless.' Av: 'nor do I occupy myself in other useless thoughts or devote myself to them.' Bg: 'in other useless thoughts.' Ej, G, Sg: 'pastimes or business.'

8. This is as though she had said: For now all these offices are devoted to the practice of the love of God—namely, all the ability wherewith my soul and my body are provided: memory, understanding and will, inward and outward senses, desires of the sensual part and of the spiritual part. All these work in love and for the sake of love, so that all that I do I do with love and all that I suffer I suffer with the pleasure of love. This is what David meant when he said: 'I will keep my strength for Thee.'<sup>1</sup>

9. Here it is to be noted that, when the soul attains to this estate, all its exercise, both of its spiritual part and of its sensual part, be it in doing or in suffering, after whatsoever manner it be, causes it ever greater love and greater delight in God, as we have said; and even the very exercise of prayer and converse with God, which it was frequently wont to have in considerations of a different kind and in other ways, is now wholly the exercise of love. So that, whether its commerce be with temporal things or whether its exercise be concerning spiritual things, a soul in this case can ever say that its exercise is now in loving alone.

10. Happy life and happy estate and happy the soul that arrives thereat, where all is now substance of love to it and joy and delight<sup>2</sup> of betrothal; wherein the Bride may indeed say to the Divine Spouse those words which she addresses to Him out of pure love in the Songs: 'All the new and the old apples I have kept for Thee.'<sup>3</sup> Which is as if she should say: My Beloved, I desire for Thy sake to have all that is hard and wearisome, and all that is sweet and delectable I desire for Thee. But the sense of this line, as we have interpreted it, is that the soul in this estate of the Spiritual Betrothal walks habitually in union and love of God, which is the common and habitual presence of the loving will in God.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**T**RULY this soul is lost to all things and is gained only to love, its spirit being now occupied in naught else. For this reason it fails even in that which belongs to the active life and in other outward exercises, in order really to fulfil the one thing that the Spouse said was needful, which is to abide with God and to be continually exercised in His love.<sup>4</sup> This He prizes and esteems to such a high degree

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lviii, 10 [A.V., lix, 9].

<sup>2</sup> S: 'joy of delight.'

<sup>3</sup> Canticles vii, 13. A omits the following words: 'Which is . . . desire for Thee.'

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke x, 42.

that He reproved Martha because she desired to withdraw Mary from His feet, so as to occupy her in other activities in the Lord's service,<sup>1</sup> considering that she was doing everything and Mary was doing nothing, since Mary was resting with the Lord, the truth being just the contrary, for there is no better or more necessary work than love. Thus, again, in the Songs He defends the Bride, conjuring all creatures in the world (who are understood here by 'daughters of Jerusalem') not to stir the Bride from her spiritual sleep of love, nor to waken her or let her open her eyes to aught else, till she please.<sup>2</sup>

2. Here it is to be noted that, for so long as the soul has not reached this estate of union of love, it must needs practise love, both in the active life and in the contemplative; but when it reaches that estate it befits it not to be occupied in other outward acts and exercises<sup>3</sup> which might keep it back, however little, from that abiding<sup>4</sup> in love with God, although they may greatly conduce to the service of God; for a very little of this pure love is more precious, in the sight of God and the soul, and of greater profit to the Church, even though the soul appear to be doing nothing, than are all these other works together. For this reason Mary Magdalene, although she wrought great good with her preaching, and would have continued to do so, because of the great desire that she had to please her Spouse and to profit the Church, hid herself in the desert for thirty years in order to surrender herself truly to this love, since it seemed to her that in every way she would gain much more by so doing, because of the great profit and importance that there is to the Church in a very little of this love.

3. Therefore if any soul should have aught of this degree of solitary love, great wrong would be done<sup>5</sup> to it, and to the Church, if, even but for a brief space, one should endeavour to busy it in active or outward affairs, of however great moment; for, since God adjures the creatures not to awaken the soul from this love, who shall dare to do so and shall not be rebuked? After all, it was to reach this goal of love that we were created. Let those, then, that are great actives, that think to girdle<sup>6</sup> the world with their outward works and their preachings, take note here that they would bring far more profit to the Church and be far more pleasing to God (apart from the good example which they would give<sup>7</sup> of themselves) if they spent only half as much time in

<sup>1</sup> Sg substitutes: 'to the Lord's detriment' [*perjuicio*, an apparent error].

<sup>2</sup> Canticles iii, 5.

<sup>3</sup> S adds: 'not being of obligation.'

<sup>4</sup> A, Av, Bz, Shave: *existencia* ['being,' 'existence'] for *asistencia* ['abiding,' 'presence'].

<sup>5</sup> Jaén reads: 'was done'; but all the other MSS. as in the text.

<sup>6</sup> Ej: 'to convert.'

<sup>7</sup> S: 'which would be given.'

abiding with God in prayer, even had they not reached such a height as this. Of a surety they would accomplish more with one piece of work than they now do with a thousand, and that with less labour, since their prayer would be of such great deserving and they would have won such spiritual strength by it. For to act otherwise is to hammer vigorously and to accomplish little more than nothing, at times<sup>1</sup> nothing at all; at times, indeed, it may even be to do harm. May God forbid that your salt should begin to lose its savour;<sup>2</sup> since, although in such a case it may seem superficially that it has some effect, it will have no substantial effect, for it is certain that good works cannot be done save in the strength<sup>3</sup> of God.

4. Oh, how much could be written here about this matter! But this is not the place for it. I have said what I have in order to explain this next stanza, for therein the soul herself makes reply to all those that impugn<sup>4</sup> this her holy leisure and that desire her to be ever working, and making great display and attracting the eye superficially, since they know nothing of the hidden root and source whence the water springs and whence comes all fruit. And thus the stanza says:

## STANZA XXIX

**If, then, on the common land, From henceforth I am neither  
seen nor found,  
You will say that I am lost; That, wandering love-stricken, I  
lost my way and was found.<sup>5</sup>**

## EXPOSITION

5. The soul, in this stanza, makes answer to a tacit reproach uttered by those of the world,<sup>6</sup> which they are wont to direct to such as give themselves truly to God; for they consider them extravagant in their queerness and aloofness<sup>7</sup> and in their general behaviour, and also say that they are useless in important matters and are lost with respect to all things that the world prizes and esteems. This reproach the soul

<sup>1</sup> S: 'even at times.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to become vain.']

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'in the truth.'

<sup>4</sup> S omits 'all.' Jaén, A, B, make 'those' feminines [with evident reference to 'creatures,' 'daughters'].

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, *ganada*, 'gained.' Bz, Ej and G, however, read *hallada*, 'found.']

<sup>6</sup> A: 'by the worldly.'

<sup>7</sup> Sg: 'and recollectedness and aloofness.'

meets in an excellent way, facing it very boldly and daringly, as it faces all else that the world can impute to it, for, having attained to a living love of God, it takes little heed thereof. And not only so, but the Bride herself confesses it in this stanza, and glories and boasts of having done such things and become lost to the world and to herself for the sake of her Beloved. And thus<sup>1</sup> her meaning in this stanza, where she speaks to those of the world, is that, if they no longer see her in the places which she frequented formerly, following the pastimes which she was wont to follow in the world, they are to say and to believe that she has become lost to them and is withdrawn from them, and that she considers this so great a gain<sup>2</sup> that she has herself desired thus to be lost in going after her Beloved and seeking Him, enkindled as she is with love for Him. And, that they may see how great a gain to her is this loss, and may not consider it to be folly or delusion, she says that this loss was her gain and that she became lost of set purpose.

**If, then, on the common land, From henceforth I am neither seen nor found,<sup>3</sup>**

6. By 'common land' is ordinarily meant a place common to all, where people are wont to come together to have solace and recreation, and where likewise shepherds pasture their flocks; and thus the soul here understands by this common land the world, where worldly folk pursue their pastimes and converse, and pasture the flocks of their desires. Herein the soul says to those of the world that if she is not seen or found as she was before she became wholly God's, they are to consider her, by reason of this very fact, as lost; and that they may say this, since she rejoices in it and desires them to say it. She adds:

**You will say that I am lost;**

7. He that loves is not abashed before the world concerning the works which he does for God, neither does he hide them with shame, even though the whole world condemn them. For he that is ashamed to confess the Son of God before men, and ceases to do His works, the same Son of God, as He says through Saint Luke, will be ashamed to confess him before His Father.<sup>4</sup> Wherefore the soul, with the courage of her love, takes pride in having been seen doing such work to the

<sup>1</sup> S inserts 'now.'

<sup>2</sup> S omits: 'and that . . . a gain.' Av, Bz, Ej, G, Sg read: 'and let them understand also.' Jaén: 'and that she considers this so well.' B, Bg: 'and that she considers this well.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit the commentary on these lines.

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke ix, 26. The MSS. add 'Saint Matthew' after 'Saint Luke.'

glory of her Beloved and having become lost therein to all things of the world. Wherefore she says: 'You will say that I am lost.'

8. Few spiritual persons attain to this perfect boldness and determination in their works; for, although some attempt to do so and carry on this practice, and some consider themselves to be very far advanced therein, they never completely lose themselves with respect to certain points, whether connected with the world or with their own natures, nor do they do work for Christ which is perfect and completely detached, looking not at what will be said of them or at what will appear. Such as these will be unable to say, 'You will say that I am lost,' for they are not lost to themselves in their works; they are still ashamed to confess Christ in their works before men; they have respect for things of the world; they live not<sup>1</sup> truly in Christ.

### That, wandering love-stricken,

9. This is to say that, wandering stricken with love for God, and practising the virtues,

### I lost my way<sup>2</sup> and was found.<sup>3</sup>

10. Knowing the words of the Spouse in the Gospel, namely, that no man can serve two masters, but that he must needs fail one,<sup>4</sup> the soul here says that, in order not to fail God, she has failed all that is not God—that is, all other things and her very self, losing all this for love of Him. He that is indeed in love allows himself to be lost to all things else, that he may have the greater gain as to that which he loves; wherefore the soul says here that she became lost—that is, that she allowed herself to be lost of set purpose. And this is after two manners, as follows. First, she is lost to herself; she takes no thought for herself in any way, but only for the Beloved, surrenders herself to Him freely, and disinterestedly,<sup>5</sup> and in this wise becomes lost to herself, desiring no gain for herself in any way soever. Secondly, she is lost to all things,<sup>6</sup> and takes no heed of aught<sup>7</sup> pertaining to herself, but only of those things that concern the Beloved; and this is to become lost, namely, to desire that others may gain her.<sup>8</sup>

11. Such is he that walks love-stricken for God, and that aspires

<sup>1</sup> S: 'wherefore they live not.'

<sup>2</sup> [Or 'I became lost,' as sometimes below.]

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'gained,' and so throughout the paragraph. The play of words (see n. 8, below) has greater point on that account.] Ej has *hallada* [see p. 329, n. 5, above].

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew vi, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 110, n. 4, above.

<sup>6</sup> [Lit., 'the second, to all things'] except in S, which reads as in the text.

<sup>7</sup> So S. The other authorities have: 'of all things.'

<sup>8</sup> [*que es tener gana que la ganen*. Cf. p. 110, n. 6, above.]

to no gain or prize, but only to lose all things and to be lost to himself in his will for God's sake, which he holds as gain. And gain it is, even as Saint Paul declares, when he says: *Mori lucrum*.<sup>1</sup> That is: My dying for Christ is my spiritual gain as to all things and to Himself. And therefore the soul says:<sup>2</sup> 'I was found'; for he that cannot be lost to himself is not found, but is indeed lost, even as Our Lord says in the Gospel, in these words: 'He who will gain his life for himself, the same shall lose it; and he who loses his life for My sake, the same shall gain it.'<sup>3</sup> And if we desire to understand this said line more spiritually and more to the purpose for the which it is here used, it must be known that when a soul on the spiritual road has reached such a point that it has become lost to all natural roads<sup>4</sup> and ways of progress in converse with God, so that it seeks Him no longer by meditations or forms or feelings or any other means which belong to creatures and to senses, but has passed beyond all this and beyond all modes and manners of its own, having converse with God and fruition of Him in faith and love:<sup>5</sup> then it says that it has indeed gained God, for indeed it has become lost to all that is not God and to that which is in itself.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**N**ow, therefore, that the soul has been gained in this manner, all that it does is gain; for all the strength of its faculties is converted into spiritual intercourse, with the Beloved, of most delectable interior love, wherein the interior communications that pass between God and the soul are of such delicate and sublime delight that there is no mortal tongue which can express it, nor human understanding that can understand it. For even as the betrothed maiden, on the day of her betrothal, is aware of naught save that this is love's delight and festival, and cares only to bring out all her jewels and her adornments, to give pleasure and delight therewith to her spouse, and the spouse shows her nothing less than all his riches and excellences, to give her joy and solace, so here, in this spiritual betrothal, where the soul indeed feels that which the Bride says in the Songs, namely: 'I to my Beloved and my Beloved to me,'<sup>6</sup> the virtues and adornments of

<sup>1</sup> Philippians i, 21.

<sup>2</sup> S: 'My dying is to profit spiritually, and gain for Christ. Therefore the soul says.'

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew xvi, 25.

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'natural manners.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'but, passing only beyond all this and beyond all methods of its own and beyond all manners, has converse with God and fruition of Him in faith and love.'

<sup>6</sup> Canticles [vi, 3,] vii, 10.

the Bride-Soul and the magnificences and adornments of the Spouse, the Son of God, come to light and are displayed, so that the feast of this betrothal may be celebrated, and the good things and delights of each of the two may be communicated to the other with the wine of delectable love in the Holy Spirit. To express this the soul addresses the Spouse and says in this stanza :

## STANZA XXX

**With flowers and emeralds Gathered in the cool mornings  
We will make the garlands flowering in thy love And inter-  
woven with one hair from my head.**

## EXPOSITION

2. In this stanza the Bride<sup>1</sup> speaks again with the Spouse in the communion and refreshment of love, and that which she does therein is to treat of the solace and delight that the Bride-Soul and the Son of God have in the possession of the riches of each other's virtues and gifts and in the mutual exercise of these, having fruition thereof between themselves in communion of love.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in speaking with Him, she says that they will make rich garlands of gifts and virtues, acquired and gained in a pleasant and convenient season, beautified and made graceful in the love which He has for her and sustained and preserved in the love which she has for Him. Wherefore she calls this fruition of the virtues making garlands of them ; because in all of them, as in flowers that are in garlands, they both have joy in the mutual love which each bears to the other.

**With flowers and emeralds**

3. The flowers are the virtues of the soul and the emeralds are the gifts which it has of God.<sup>3</sup> These flowers and emeralds are

**Gathered in the cool mornings<sup>4</sup>**

4. This signifies that they are gained and acquired in youth, which is life's cool morning.<sup>5</sup> She says they are 'gathered,' because the virtues

<sup>1</sup> S : 'the Bride-Soul.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G : 'in communion of love and of union.' Sg : 'in communion of union of love.'

<sup>3</sup> S : 'which it has in God.'

<sup>4</sup> G : 'cool mountains.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'mornings.'] G : 'mountains.' Cf. p. 112, n. 1.

that are acquired in this time of youth are choice<sup>1</sup> and most acceptable to God, since in the season of youth there is<sup>2</sup> more resistance on the part of the vices to their acquisition, and a greater inclination and readiness to lose them on the part of nature; and also because, since the soul begins to pluck them from this season of her youth onward, the virtues which she acquires are more perfect and more choice.<sup>3</sup> She calls these times of youth the cool mornings, because even as the cool of the morning is more pleasant in spring than are other parts of the day, even so is the virtue of youth before God. And these cool mornings may also be interpreted as the acts of love wherein the virtues are acquired, which are more pleasing to God than are cool mornings to the sons<sup>4</sup> of men.

5. Likewise are understood here by the cool mornings works which are performed at times of spiritual aridity and hardship, which are denoted by the coolness of winter mornings;<sup>5</sup> and these works, performed for God's sake at times of spiritual aridity and hardship, are greatly prized by God, because the virtues and gifts are richly acquired therein. And those which are acquired after this manner and with labour are for the most part choicer, rarer and more lasting than if they were acquired only at times of spiritual sweetness and delight; for in aridity and hardship and labour<sup>6</sup> virtue takes root, even as God said to Saint Paul, in these words: 'Virtue is made perfect in weakness.'<sup>7</sup> Wherefore, in order to extol the excellence and the virtues whereof garlands are to be made for the Beloved, it is well said: 'Gathered in the cool mornings,' because the Beloved has great joy only in those flowers and emeralds—which are virtues and gifts—that are choice and perfect,<sup>8</sup> and not in those which are imperfect. Wherefore the Bride-Soul says here that for Him, and of these flowers and emeralds,

### We will make the garlands

6. For the understanding hereof it must be known that all the virtues and gifts which the soul, and God in the soul, acquire, are in the soul as a garden of various flowers wherewith it is marvellously beautified, even as with a vesture of rare variety. For the better comprehension

<sup>1</sup> [On this word, see p. 112, n. 2.]

<sup>2</sup> S: '... to God, this being the season when there is.'

<sup>3</sup> A, S omit: 'and more choice.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G: 'to the eyes' [*ojos* for *hijos*].

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'by the cool winter mornings.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, Sg: 'labour and temptation.' G: 'hardship and temptation.'

<sup>7</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 9.

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'and gifts.' G, Sg read: 'and perfections' for 'and perfect.'

hereof it must be known that, even as the material flowers are gathered one by one and made into the garland (which is gradually formed from them), so, after the same manner, as the spiritual flowers of virtues and gifts are acquired one by one, they are gradually set in order in the soul.<sup>1</sup> And, when they have all been acquired, the garland of perfection is then completed in the soul, so that both the soul and the Spouse<sup>2</sup> rejoice, when they are beautified and adorned with this garland, even as in the estate of perfection. These are the garlands which the Bride says have to be made, and this is to gird and surround<sup>3</sup> oneself with a variety of flowers and emeralds, which are perfect gifts and virtues, in order to appear worthily with this beauteous and precious adornment before the face of the King, and to merit being placed on an equality with Him even as a queen by His side, which the soul merits through the beauty of its variety. Thus David, speaking with Christ in such a case, said: *Astitit Regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato, circumdata varietate*.<sup>4</sup> Which signifies: Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in vesture of gold, surrounded with variety. Which is as much as to say: Upon Thy right hand did she stand vested in perfect love and surrounded with a variety of perfect virtues and gifts. She says not: 'I alone will make the garlands,' nor yet 'Thou alone wilt make them,' but 'We will make them, both of us together';<sup>5</sup> for the virtues cannot be wrought by the soul alone, nor can she attain to them alone, without the help of God, neither does God work them alone in the soul without her co-operation; for, although it is true that every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from above, descending from the Father of lights, as Saint James says,<sup>6</sup> yet no such thing as this is received apart from the capacity<sup>7</sup> and without the co-operation of the soul that receives it. The Bride, in the Songs, speaks of this with the Spouse, saying: 'Draw me, we will run after Thee.'<sup>8</sup> So the movement towards goodness must come from God, and from God alone, as is here declared; but the writer says not that he alone will run, or she alone, but that they will run both of them together—that is, that God and the soul will work together.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'they gradually enter the soul.'

<sup>2</sup> S: '... in the soul, where she and the Spouse.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'and adorn.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xlv, 10 [A.V., xlv, 9].

<sup>5</sup> S abbreviates: 'And she says not "I will make," nor "Thou wilt make" the garlands alone, but "both [of us] together."'

<sup>6</sup> St. James i, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Sg: 'the humility.'

<sup>8</sup> Canticles i, 3 [A.V., i, 4].

<sup>9</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'that God and the soul.' S re-arranges the clauses of the last sentence without changing the meaning.

7. This short line is understood with great propriety of the Church and of Christ, wherein His Bride, who is the Church, speaks with Him, saying: 'We will make the garlands.' By garlands are here understood all the holy souls begotten by Christ in the Church, each one of whom is as a garland adorned with flowers of virtues and gifts, and all of whom together are a garland for the head of Christ the Spouse. And likewise by the beauteous garlands can be understood the laurel-crowns<sup>1</sup> (which is another name for them) made likewise by Christ and the Church. These are of three kinds. The first is of the beauteous white flowers<sup>2</sup> of all the virgins, each with its crown<sup>3</sup> of virginity, and all of them together will be a crown to be placed upon the head of Christ the Spouse. The second crown is that of the resplendent flowers of the holy doctors,<sup>4</sup> and all of them together will be a crown to place upon the head of Christ above that of the virgins.<sup>5</sup> The third is composed of the crimson carnations of the martyrs,<sup>6</sup> each one likewise with his martyr's crown, all of which together will be one crown forming as it were a crown<sup>7</sup> to add to that of Christ the Spouse. So greatly beautified and so gracious to the sight with these three garlands<sup>8</sup> will be Christ the Spouse that there will be said in Heaven that which the Bride says of Him in the Songs, namely: 'Go forth, daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him on the day of his betrothal, and on the day of the joy of his heart.'<sup>9</sup> We will make these garlands, then, she says:

### Flowering in thy love

8. The flower which belongs to the works and virtues<sup>10</sup> is the grace<sup>11</sup> and virtue which they derive from the love of God, without which not only would they not be flowering but they would all be dry and worthless before God, even though humanly they were perfect. But because He gives His grace and love these works flower in His love.

### And interwoven with one hair from my head.

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, *lauréola*, 'laurel-crown,' differing only by one letter from *auréola*, halo.] Bg has 'roses' for 'laurel-crowns.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'of beauty and white flowers.'

<sup>3</sup> [Throughout this paragraph, except where otherwise stated, the word rendered 'crown' is *lauréola*.]

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg add: 'each with his crown as a doctor.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg, Ej, G omit: 'above that of the virgins.' Bg also omits: 'to place.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'the third [is] of the martyrs, which is of crimson carnations.'

<sup>7</sup> [In the last line 'crown' is *lauréola*; here it is *remate*.]

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg have 'laurel-crowns' [*lauréolas*] for 'garlands.'

<sup>9</sup> Canticles iii, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'to the virtues.'

<sup>11</sup> Av: 'is the gain.'

9. This hair of hers is her will and the love which she has for the Beloved, the which love possesses and performs the same office as the thread in the garland;<sup>1</sup> for even as the thread binds<sup>2</sup> and ties the flowers in the garland, so the love of the soul binds and ties the virtues in the soul and sustains them within her. For, as Saint Paul says,<sup>3</sup> charity is the bond and link of perfection. So that in this love of the soul the supernatural gifts and virtues are so essentially bound together that, if it were to break by failing God, then all the virtues of the soul would become unbound<sup>4</sup> and would fail, even as the flowers would fall apart if the thread of the garland were to be broken. So that it suffices not for God to have love towards us that He may give us virtues; we too must have love towards Him that we may receive and keep them. She says 'one hair' of her head, and not 'many hairs,'<sup>5</sup> in order to convey the fact that her will is now alone,<sup>6</sup> detached from all other hairs, which are strange affections for others. Herein she markedly insists upon the worth and price of these garlands of virtues; for, when love is single and firmly fixed upon God, in the way that is here described, the virtues are likewise perfect and complete, and flower freely in the love of God; for then the love which He has toward the soul is inestimable, even as the soul feels also.

10. Now if I desired to explain the beauty of the interweaving which characterizes these flowers of virtues and emeralds,<sup>7</sup> or to say aught of the strength and majesty with which the order and arrangement of them endow the soul and the fairness and grace wherewith this vesture of variety adorns it, I should find no words and terms wherein to express myself. Of the devil, God says in the Book of Job<sup>8</sup> that his body is like shields of molten metal, garnished with scales knit together among themselves so closely that each is joined to another in such a way that the air cannot pass between them. Now if the devil has such strength in himself, through being clothed with scales of malice<sup>9</sup> all compact and interwoven one with another (all of which is signified<sup>10</sup> by the scales), that his body can be described as being like shields of molten metal, the scales of malice being in themselves weakness, how

<sup>1</sup> Av: 'the same office that He performed in the garland.' [Only one letter is different from that of Jaén here, Av reading: *el hilo* for *el hilo*.]

<sup>2</sup> S: 'even as in her He binds.'

<sup>3</sup> Colossians iii, 14.

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'become loosed' [see p. 115, n. 2].

<sup>5</sup> S: 'and not "many."'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'is now set upon Him alone.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej: 'of virtues and garlands.' G, Sg: 'of virtues and garlands with the emeralds.'

<sup>8</sup> Job xli, 6-7.

<sup>9</sup> [Lit., 'with malices.']

<sup>10</sup> S: 'is denoted.'

great will be the strength of this soul clothed entirely in strong virtues, so compacted and intertwined among themselves that there is room between them for no foulness or imperfection! Each one with its strength adds strength to the soul,<sup>1</sup> with its beauty it adds beauty, with its valour and price it makes it rich, and with its majesty it adds to it dominion and greatness. How marvellous, then, to the spiritual sight will be this Bride-Soul with the adornment<sup>2</sup> of these gifts at the right hand of the King her Spouse! 'Beautiful are thy steps in shoes,'<sup>3</sup> O Prince's daughter,' says the Spouse of her in the Songs.<sup>4</sup> And he says 'Prince's daughter' to denote the princely character which she possesses here. And if he calls her beautiful in her shoes, what will she be in her vesture!

11. And because not only has she wondrous beauty in the vesture of these flowers but she also derives a fearful strength and power from the arrangement and order of them, and also from the intertwining<sup>5</sup> of the emeralds of innumerable Divine gifts, the Spouse says of her likewise in the said Songs: 'Thou art terrible, arrayed like the armies<sup>6</sup> of the camps.'<sup>7</sup> For these virtues and gifts of God, while they refresh with their spiritual fragrance, minister strength also with their substance when they are united in the soul. For this cause, when the Bride in the Songs was weak and sick of love, because she had not succeeded in binding and entwining these flowers and emeralds with the hair of her love, and when she desired to strengthen herself by means of the said bond and union of them, she entreated Him for this union in these words, saying: 'Strengthen me with flowers, compass me about with apples, for I am swooning with love.'<sup>8</sup> Meaning by the flowers, the virtues, and by the apples, the other gifts.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

I THINK it has been explained how by means of the interweaving<sup>9</sup> of these garlands and the planting of them in the soul this Bride-Soul endeavours to describe the Divine union of love that exists in this estate between her and God. The Spouse is the flowers, for, as He

<sup>1</sup> Jaén, A, Av, Bz, Ej, G: 'adds to the soul.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G: 'with the manner and adornment.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg have: *con el calzado* [for *en los calzados*: the variant is best translated 'with shoes,' 'shod'; cf. Canticles vii, 1, A.V.].

<sup>4</sup> Canticles vii, 1.

<sup>5</sup> G, Sg: 'the interior.'

<sup>6</sup> S: 'the hosts.'

<sup>7</sup> Canticles vi, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Canticles ii, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Sg has *entretenimiento* ['arrangement'] for *entreteximiento* ['interweaving'].

says,<sup>1</sup> He is the flower of the field<sup>2</sup> and the lily of the valleys. And the hair of the love of the soul is, as we have said, that which binds this flower of flowers and unites it with herself. Now, as the Apostle says, love is the bond of perfection,<sup>3</sup> which is union with God, and the soul is the sheaf<sup>4</sup> wherein these garlands are gathered together, since the soul is the subject of this glory, appearing not now to be that which it was aforetime, but the very flower of perfection with the perfection and beauty of all flowers; since this thread of love binds the two—that is to say, God and the soul<sup>5</sup>—with such firmness,<sup>6</sup> and so unites and transforms them and makes them one in love, that, although they differ in substance, yet in glory and in appearance the soul seems to be God and God the soul.

2. Such is this union. It is wondrous above all that can be expressed. Some conception of it may be formed from that which the Scripture says of Jonathan and David in the First Book of the Kings, where it says that the love which Jonathan had to David was so strait that it knit the soul of Jonathan with the soul of David.<sup>7</sup> If the love of one man for another man was so strong that it could knit one soul with another,<sup>8</sup> what will be the union<sup>9</sup> that is to be made between the soul and God its Spouse by the love which the soul has to God Himself, especially since the principal Lover here is God Himself,<sup>10</sup> Who with the omnipotence of His boundless love absorbs the soul in Himself, with more efficacy and force than that of a torrent of fire absorbing a drop of morning dew, which is wont to rise and dissolve<sup>11</sup> in the air? The hair, then, that performs such a work of union must needs, of a surety, be very strong and subtle, since with such great force it penetrates the

<sup>1</sup> Canticles ii, 1.

<sup>2</sup> S modifies: 'the Bride desires in this last stanza to explain the Divine union of love which exists between God and her in this estate, since the Spouse, in [i.e., among] the flowers, is the flower of the field.'

<sup>3</sup> Colossians iii, 14. S adds: 'love must be maintained above all things.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'exercise.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'for since this thread of love binds God and the soul.'

<sup>6</sup> Sg: 'with such fury' [i.e., 'vehemence'].

<sup>7</sup> 1 Kings xviii, 1 [A.V., 1 Samuel xviii, 1].

<sup>8</sup> S reads [from the beginning of the paragraph]: 'Such is this union, wondrous above all that can be expressed. And of it some degree is described in that which the Scripture says in the First Book of the Kings, concerning the love which Jonathan had to David, which was so strait that it knit the soul of the one with the other. *Anima Jonathæ conglutinata est animæ David.* Then if the love of one man for another was so strong that it could knit their souls,' etc.

<sup>9</sup> [Lit., 'the knitting.']

<sup>10</sup> Ej, G: 'that principal Lover is God Himself.' Sg: 'that Prince-Lover is God Himself.'

<sup>11</sup> [Lit., 'to fly, dissolved in the air.'] Ej, G, Sg read: *resulta* ['issues,' 'results'] for *resuelta* ['dissolved'].

parts that it binds; for the which cause, in the stanza following, the soul declares the properties of this her beauteous hair, saying :

### STANZA XXXI

**By that hair alone Which thou regardedst fluttering on my neck,  
Beholding it upon my neck, thou wert captivated, And wert wounded<sup>1</sup> by one of mine eyes.**

#### EXPOSITION

3. Three things are signified by the soul in this stanza. First, she declares that that love<sup>2</sup> wherewith the virtues are bound together is nothing less than a strong love, for in truth it must be such in order that the virtues may be preserved. Secondly, she says that God was greatly captivated by this her hair of love, seeing that it was one only and was so strong. Thirdly, she says that God was intimately enamoured of her, seeing the purity and integrity of her faith. And she says thus :

**By that hair alone Which thou regardedst fluttering on my neck,**

4. The neck signifies that fortitude whereon, it is said, was fluttering the hair of love, wherewith are interwoven the virtues, and this is love in fortitude. For it suffices not, in order to keep the virtues together, that there be one hair only; it must also be strong, so that no contrary vice may break it in any part of<sup>3</sup> the garland of perfection. For the virtues are bound together by this hair of the love of the soul in such a way that, if it were to break<sup>4</sup> in any place, then, as we have said, it would be lost in them all; for, where one of the virtues is, there are they all, and likewise, where there is one lacking, they are lacking all. And she says that this hair fluttered upon her neck,<sup>5</sup> because, in the fortitude of the soul,<sup>6</sup> this love flies toward God with great fortitude and lightness, without being hindered by aught soever. And, even as the breeze stirs the hair and causes it to flutter upon the neck, even so does

<sup>1</sup> [On this word, see p. 53, n. 1.]

<sup>2</sup> Ej, Sg: 'that that hair.' G: 'that that hair-love.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'may anywhere enter.'

<sup>4</sup> Av, Bz: 'to be lost.'

<sup>5</sup> A: 'upon her hair.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg add: 'that is, upon the neck of the soul.'

the breeze of the Holy Spirit move and excite strong love that it may make flights to God; for, without this Divine wind, which moves the faculties to the practice of Divine love, the virtues work not, neither have any effect,<sup>1</sup> although they be in the soul. And, by saying that the Beloved regarded this hair fluttering upon her neck, she signifies how great is the love of God for strong love;<sup>2</sup> for to regard is to behold with particular attention and esteem for that which one beholds, and strong love causes God to turn His eyes often to behold it. She continues thus:

### Beholding it upon my neck,

5. This the soul says, in order to convey the fact that not alone did God prize and esteem this her love, when He saw that it was alone,<sup>3</sup> but likewise that He loved it when He saw that it was strong; because for God to look is for God to love, even as for God to regard is, as we have said, for Him to esteem that which He regards. And in this line she speaks again of the neck, saying of the hair: 'Thou didst behold it upon my neck,' because, as has been said, that is the cause of His loving her so greatly, namely that He saw her in her fortitude, so that it is as if she had said: Thou didst love it when Thou didst see that it was strong without weakness or fear, and alone without any other love, fluttering with lightness and fervour.

6. Until now God had not looked upon this hair<sup>4</sup> in such a way as to be taken captive<sup>5</sup> by it, because He had not seen it alone and detached<sup>6</sup> from the remaining hairs of other loves and desires, affections and pleasures, and thus it<sup>7</sup> fluttered not alone upon the neck of strength, but now that, through mortifications and trials and temptations and penance, it has succeeded in becoming so detached and so strong that it can be broken by no force<sup>8</sup> and by no occasion whatsoever, God looks upon it and takes and binds in it the flowers of these garlands, since it is now sufficiently strong to keep them bound together in the soul.

7. But what these temptations and trials are, and of what nature, and how far they can work<sup>9</sup> in the soul that it<sup>10</sup> may be able to attain to this strength of love, wherein God is united to the soul—of all this

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'make their effects.']

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'for the strong soul.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'when He saw that it was alone and strong.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz: 'this neck.'

<sup>5</sup> A, G, Bg, Ej, S read: *prenderse* ['be taken'] for *prenderse* ['be taken captive'].

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G: 'strayed,' 'deviated.'

<sup>7</sup> S: 'wherewith it.'

<sup>8</sup> Av, Bz: 'strength.'

<sup>9</sup> [*Lit.*, 'reach.']

<sup>10</sup> G, Sg: 'reach to the height that it.'

something is said in<sup>1</sup> the exposition of the four stanzas which begin: 'O living flame of love.' The soul, having passed through these experiences, has attained to such a degree of love that she has now merited Divine union. Wherefore she says next:

**Thou wert captivated,**

8. Oh, thing that art worthy of all acceptation<sup>2</sup> and joy, that God should be captivated by a hair! The cause of this so precious capture is that He has been pleased to stop to look at the fluttering of the hair,<sup>3</sup> as is said in the lines preceding; because, as we have said, for God to look is for Him to love. For if He, in His great mercy,<sup>4</sup> had not first beheld us and loved us, as Saint John says,<sup>5</sup> and humbled Himself, He would never have been captivated by the fluttering of the hair of our lowly love, since this love could not soar so high as to attain to the capture of this Divine bird of the heights. But since He humbled Himself to look upon us and to incite us<sup>6</sup> to fly in love and to make us to fly ever higher, and thus gave to our love the worth and strength necessary thereto,<sup>7</sup> He Himself was taken captive by the flight of this hair—that is, He Himself was glad and pleased, wherefore He was captivated; and this is the meaning of the phrase: 'Beholding it upon my neck, Thou wert captivated.' For it is a very credible thing that a bird of lowly flight should be able to capture a royal eagle flying high, if the eagle descends to its lowliness, desiring to be caught.

**And wert wounded by one of mine eyes.**

9. By the eye is here understood faith. She says by 'one' of them alone, and that He was 'wounded' by it, because if the faith and fidelity<sup>8</sup> of the soul toward God were not alone, but were mingled with respect or courtesy to some other, she would not succeed in wounding God by love. Wherefore it must be by but one eye alone that the Beloved is wounded, even as it is by one hair alone that He is taken captive. And the love wherewith the Spouse is taken captive by the Bride in this singleness and fidelity that He sees in her is so intimate that, if He was<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S: 'in the *Dark Night* and in.' [On the reference, see Vol. III, p. 4, of this edition.]

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G: 'of all attention.' S: 'of all esteem.'

<sup>3</sup> S adds: 'upon the neck.'

<sup>4</sup> A, S: 'in His grace and mercy.' G: 'in His grace of mercy.'

<sup>5</sup> 1 St. John iv, 10 [or 19].

<sup>6</sup> Thus Ej, G, Sg [which P. Silverio follows]. The other authorities have: '... of the heights, to [i.e., that He might] look upon us and incite us.' S reads similarly with slight verbal differences.

<sup>7</sup> S adds: 'if He beheld not.'

<sup>8</sup> A: 'faith and felicity.'

<sup>9</sup> S: 'if He is.'

taken captive by the hair of her love, by the eye of her faith His captivity is made closer with so fast a knot that there is inflicted upon Him a wound of love, through the great tenderness of the affection wherewith He loves her, and she enters into His love the more deeply.

10. This same figure of the hair and of the eye is used by the Spouse in the Songs, where He speaks with the Bride, saying: 'Thou hast wounded My heart, My sister; thou hast wounded My heart with one of thine eyes and with one hair of thy neck.'<sup>1</sup> Herein He twice declares that she has wounded His heart—namely, with the eye and with the hair. Wherefore the soul in the stanza describes the hair and the eye, denoting therein the union which she has with God, according to the understanding and according to the will; for faith, signified by the eye, is subdued in the understanding by faith and in the will by love. In this union<sup>2</sup> the soul here glories and gives thanks to her Spouse for this favour, which she has received from His hand, esteeming it a great benefit that He has been pleased to take pleasure in her love and to be captivated thereby. Here might one meditate upon the joy, gladness and delight which the soul will have with such a prisoner, since she has for so long been His prisoner and for so long has been enamoured of Him.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**G**REAT is the power and the importunity of love, since it takes captive and binds<sup>3</sup> God Himself.<sup>4</sup> Happy the soul that loves, since it holds God a prisoner, subjected to all that it wills; for He has this quality that, if He be taken by love, and taken willingly, He will be made to do what is willed of Him; but otherwise, one cannot speak to Him<sup>5</sup> or do aught with Him, although one make the greatest efforts; but through love He will be bound<sup>6</sup> with a hair. The soul, knowing this, and also that, far in excess of her merits, He has granted her such great favours as to raise her to such high love with

<sup>1</sup> Canticles iv, 9. [See p. 118, n. 2, above.]

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg modify: 'is subdued in the understanding, and love, signified by the hair, in the will. Wherefore there is union in the understanding by faith and in the will by love. In this union . . .'

<sup>3</sup> A, Bg have *laga* ['wounds'] for *liga* ['binds'].

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg give this sentence to Stanza XXXI, and begin the Annotation: 'Happy the soul . . .'

<sup>5</sup> Av, Bz have: *hallarle* ['find Him'] for *hablarle* ['speak to Him'].

<sup>6</sup> So the MSS. Jaén reads: 'He is bound.'

such rich endowments<sup>1</sup> of gifts and virtues, she attributes it all to Him<sup>2</sup> in the following stanza, saying:

## STANZA XXXII

**When thou didst look on<sup>3</sup> me, Thine eyes imprinted upon me  
their grace;<sup>4</sup>  
For this cause didst thou love me greatly, Whereby mine eyes  
deserved to adore that which they saw in thee.**

### EXPOSITION

2. It is the property of perfect love to be unwilling to accept or take aught for itself, and to attribute naught to itself, but all things to the Beloved. This is so even with our lower love—how much more, then, with love for God, which reason so urgently requires of us! Wherefore, since in the last two stanzas the Bride appears to have been attributing something to herself, as where she has said that she will make garlands together with the Spouse, and that they will be interwoven<sup>5</sup> with a hair of her head,<sup>6</sup> which is work of no small moment and esteem; and since afterwards she declares, exultingly, that the Spouse has been taken captive by this hair and wounded by her eye, wherein likewise she appears to be attributing to herself great deserving; now in the present stanza she desires to explain her meaning and to correct an erroneous conclusion which might be drawn from this, for she is apprehensive and fearful that some worth and merit will be attributed to her, and that for that reason there will be attributed to God less than that which is His due and than that which she desires. So she attributes it all to Him, and at the same time gives Him thanks for it, saying to Him that the reason for His being taken captive by the hair<sup>7</sup> of her love and wounded by the eye of her faith is that He has granted her the favour of looking upon her with love, and of thus making her graceful and pleasing in His sight; and that through this grace and worth which she has received of Him she has merited His

<sup>1</sup> [The Spanish word, *prendas*, is allied in derivation and meaning with the verb *prender*, to take captive, used so frequently above.]

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'with such just endowments of gifts and virtues, the soul attributes it only *solo lo for se lo* to Him.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 183, n. 4, above.

<sup>4</sup> S omits: 'and that they will be.'

<sup>5</sup> Sg: 'thy grace.' See p. 183, n. 5, above.

<sup>6</sup> Av: 'with her neck.'

A, B, Ej, G have 'taken' for 'taken captive.' Av: 'by the neck.' [See also p. 118, n. 5.]

love, and has now in herself become worthy to adore her Beloved pleasingly and to do works worthy of His grace and love. The stanza continues:

**When thou didst look on me,**

3. That is to say, with affection of love, for we have already said that for God to look signifies here for God to love.

**Thine eyes imprinted upon me their grace;<sup>1</sup>**

4. By the eyes of the Spouse is here understood His merciful Divinity, which, turning in mercy to the soul, imprints upon her and infuses in her His love and grace, beautifying her thereby and raising her up so as to make her the consort of His own Divinity. And, seeing the dignity and height wherein God has set her, the soul says:

**For this cause didst thou love me greatly,**

5. To love greatly<sup>2</sup> is more than to love simply: it is, as it were, to love doubly<sup>3</sup>—that is, for two motives or causes. And thus in this line the soul describes the two motives and causes for love which He has towards her; for the which not only<sup>4</sup> did He love her when He was taken captive by her hair, but He loved her greatly when He was wounded by her eye. And she says in this line that the reason for which He loved her so greatly and so intimately was that, when He looked upon her, He desired to grant her grace that He might be pleased with her, that she might give Him her love—that is, the hair—and that, by means of His charity, He might form faith<sup>5</sup> in her, which is her eye. And thus she says: 'For this cause didst Thou love me greatly.' Because for God to set His grace in the soul is for Him to make her worthy and fit to love Him; and thus it is as if she had said: Since Thou hadst set Thy grace in me, giving me pledges worthy of Thy love, therefore didst Thou love me greatly—that is, for that reason didst Thou give me more grace.<sup>6</sup> This is that which is said by Saint John: That He gives grace for the grace that He has given,<sup>7</sup> which is to give more grace; for without His grace it is impossible to merit His grace.

6. For the understanding of this it is to be noted that, even as God

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'thy grace.'

<sup>2</sup> See p. 119, n. 6, above.

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'to love delicately.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit 'not only.' Sg omits the next few lines and reads: 'by her hair, that He might form in her, with His charity,' etc.

<sup>5</sup> Bz, S read 'inform' for 'form.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'that is . . . more grace.'

<sup>7</sup> St. John's, 16.

loves naught apart from Himself, even so He loves naught in a lowlier way<sup>1</sup> than He loves Himself; for He loves all things with respect to Himself and thus love has the final reason; wherefore He loves not things for that which they are in themselves. Therefore for God to love the soul is for Him to set it, after a certain manner, in Himself, making it equal to Himself, and thus He loves the soul in Himself with the same love<sup>2</sup> wherewith He loves Himself. Wherefore, in each of its acts, inasmuch as each is performed in God, the soul merits the love of God, because, set as it is in this grace and in this lofty place, it merits God Himself in its every act. Wherefore the Bride next says:

**Whereby mine eyes deserved<sup>3</sup> . . .**

7. That is to say, in that favour and grace which the eyes of Thy mercy wrought in me, when Thou didst look on me, making me pleasing in Thine eyes and worthy to be seen of Thee, mine eyes deserved

**. . . to adore that which they saw in thee.**

8. This is as much as to say: The faculties of my soul, O my Spouse, which are the eyes wherewith Thou canst be seen of me, have deserved to rise and look upon Thee; the which aforetime, with the wretchedness of their base operation and natural possessions, had fallen and were very low. For that the soul should be able to look upon God is that it should do works<sup>4</sup> in the grace of God; and thus the faculties of the soul have had merit in adoration because they have adored in the grace of their God, wherein all operation is meritorious. Enlightened and raised up as they are, therefore, by His grace and favour, they have adored<sup>5</sup> that which they have already seen in Him, which by reason of their blindness and wretchedness they saw not aforetime. What, then, was it that they had already seen? They had seen greatness<sup>6</sup> of virtues, abundance of sweetness, immense goodness, love and mercy in God, numberless benefits which the soul had received of Him, both when<sup>7</sup> it was very near to God and when it was not so. All this the eyes of the soul have now deserved to adore meritoriously, because they are now full of grace and pleasing to the Spouse. Before this they deserved neither to adore nor to see, nor even to consider aught of this con-

<sup>1</sup> So Jaén, A, B, Bz; also the Sanlúcar Codex (see p. 120, above). A corrector emended the Jaén MS. ('higher' for 'lowlier'). Ej, G, Sg have: 'more advantageous'; S: 'higher'; Av: 'loves naught more.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg read: 'making it equal to Himself with the same love.'

<sup>3</sup> See p. 120, n. 4, above.

<sup>4</sup> Sg: 'they have illumined.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'both in this estate when.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'for it to be able to do works.'

<sup>7</sup> S: 'It was greatness.'

cerning God, for great is the grossness<sup>1</sup> and blindness of the soul that is without His grace.

9. There is much to be borne in mind here, and much at which to grieve, when we consider how far the soul unenlightened with the love of God<sup>2</sup> is from doing that which is of obligation for it. For it has an obligation to recognize these and innumerable other favours, both temporal<sup>3</sup> and spiritual, which it has received from Him, and which it receives at every moment, and to adore and serve God ceaselessly with all its faculties; yet not only does it not do this, but it is not even worthy to consider doing it and to have cognisance of it or to realize any such thing. As complete as this is the wretchedness of those who live (or, rather, who are dead) in sin.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

FOR the better understanding of what has been said, and of what follows, it must be known that the look of God works four blessings in the soul—namely, that it cleanses, beautifies, enriches and enlightens it, even as the sun, when it sends forth its rays, dries and warms and beautifies and makes resplendent. And after God has set these last three blessings<sup>4</sup> in the soul it becomes very pleasing to Him because of them, and thus He remembers no more the foulness and the sin that it had aforesaid, even as He says through Ezechiel.<sup>5</sup> And thus, having taken away from it once and for all this sin and foulness, He never looks at them again, nor does He fail on their account to grant the soul more favours, since He judges not one thing twice.<sup>6</sup> Yet, although God forgets the evil and the sin after He has once pardoned them, it behoves the soul in no wise to consign its first sins to oblivion, for, as the Wise Man says, 'Concerning sin that is forgiven, be thou not without fear.'<sup>7</sup> And this for three reasons: first, that the soul may never more have occasion for presumption; second, that it may have matter for continual thanksgiving; third, that it may have greater confidence, and thus may receive more from God; for, if when it was in sin it received so much of God, how much greater favours shall it receive when it has set its love upon God and is free from sin!<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G: 'great is the lowness.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'the soul unenlightened—that is, the soul that has not the love of God.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'both bodily.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'these last four blessings.'

<sup>5</sup> Ezechiel xviii, 22.

<sup>6</sup> Nahum i, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Ecclesiasticus v, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'when it is free from it [i.e., sin] and has set its love upon God!' Various other readings exist, but none adds to the sense or appreciably changes it.

2. The soul, then, being mindful here of all these mercies which it has received, and seeing itself placed with such dignity near to the Spouse, rejoices greatly with delight of thanksgiving and love, being greatly aided therein by the memory of that its first estate, so lowly<sup>1</sup> and so vile that it was unworthy and unprepared not only for God to look upon it, but even to take His name upon its lips, according as He says through the prophet David.<sup>2</sup> Wherefore, seeing that there is no reason which comes from itself why God should behold it and exalt it, neither can there be such, but that the reason is of God, and consists in His fair grace and pure will,<sup>3</sup> the soul attributes its wretchedness<sup>4</sup> to itself, and to the Beloved all the blessings that it possesses, seeing that through them it now merits that which it merited not aforetime; and it takes courage and boldness to beg Him for the continuance of the Divine spiritual union, wherein favours may continue to be multiplied to it. All of which the soul expresses in the following stanza.

### STANZA XXXIII

**Despise me not, For, if thou didst find me swarthy,  
Now canst thou indeed look upon me, Since thou didst look  
upon me and leave in me grace and beauty.**

### EXPOSITION

3. The Bride now takes courage; and, esteeming herself with respect to the pledges and the reward which she has of her Beloved (seeing that, since these things come from Him, though she of herself is of little worth and merits no esteem, she merits to be esteemed<sup>5</sup> because of them), makes bold to speak to her Beloved, begging Him not to despise her or hold her of no worth, since, if she once merited this by reason of the baseness of her fault and the wretchedness of her nature, now, since first He looked upon her and adorned her with His grace and clothed her with His beauty, He may well look upon her for the second time, and many times more, and increase her grace and beauty, since there is reason and cause sufficient for this in His having

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'so bad.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xv, 4 [A.V., xvi, 4].

<sup>3</sup> Ej: 'and His mercy.' G, Sg: 'and merciful will.'

<sup>4</sup> Sg reads: *su misericordia* ['His (or "its") mercy'] for *su miseria* ['its wretchedness'].  
<sup>5</sup> S adds: 'at least.'

looked upon her when she merited it not neither had the means of doing so.

**Despise me not,**

4. This soul says not this because she desires to be reputed for aught, for the slights and insults are rather to be greatly prized<sup>1</sup> by the soul that in truth loves God; and she sees that of herself<sup>2</sup> she merits naught else, save through the grace and the gifts that she has of God, even as she continues to explain, saying:

**For, if thou didst find me swarthy,**

5. That is to say: For if ere Thou didst graciously look upon me<sup>3</sup> Thou didst find in me the baseness and blackness of faults and imperfections and wretchedness as to my condition by nature,

**Now canst thou indeed look upon me, Since thou didst look upon me**

6. Since Thou didst look upon me, taking from me that miserable swarthy colour of guilt wherewith I was not fit to be seen, and wherein Thou gavest me grace the first time, now canst Thou look upon me indeed; that is,<sup>4</sup> now can I indeed be seen, and now do I deserve to be seen,<sup>5</sup> receiving more grace from Thine eyes; since with Thine eyes not alone didst Thou take from me my swarthinness when first Thou lookedst upon me but likewise Thou didst make me worthier to be seen, since with Thy look of love Thou didst

**Leave in me grace and beauty.**

7. That which the soul has said in the two lines preceding is an exposition of that which Saint John says in the Gospel—namely, that God gives grace for grace<sup>6</sup>—for, when God sees that the soul is full of grace in His eyes, He is greatly moved to grant it more grace, inasmuch as He dwells within it, well pleased. This Moses knew, and he entreated God for more grace, desiring to constrain Him by the grace which he already had of Him, saying to God: 'Thou sayest that Thou knowest me by name and that I have found grace in Thy sight; if, then, I have found grace in Thy presence,<sup>7</sup> show me Thy face, that I may know

<sup>1</sup> Bg: 'for the contempts and insults are held in no disesteem.'

<sup>2</sup> A omits: 'of herself.'

<sup>3</sup> Thus the MSS. Jaén omits 'upon me.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej begins this paragraph with the words 'that is.'

<sup>5</sup> B, Bg: 'deserve to serve Thee.' Ej, G, Sg: 'now canst Thou indeed and I deserve to be seen' [*sic*].

<sup>6</sup> St. John i, 16.

<sup>7</sup> S: 'in the sight of Thy presence.'

Thee and may find grace in the sight of Thine eyes.<sup>1</sup> And because the soul is magnified,<sup>2</sup> honoured and beautified by this grace in God's sight, as we have said, therefore it is loved by Him ineffably.<sup>3</sup> So that if, before it was in His grace, He loved it for His own sake, now that it is in His grace, He loves it not only for His own sake, but also for itself; and thus He is enamoured of its beauty, by its effects<sup>4</sup> and works, now that it is never without them,<sup>5</sup> and He continually communicates to it greater love and more graces, and, as He magnifies and honours it ever more, so does He ever become more captivated by it. For thus God declares in speaking with Jacob His friend in the Book of Isaías, saying: 'Since thou hast become honourable and glorious in Mine eyes, I have loved thee.'<sup>6</sup> Which is as much as to say: Since Mine eyes gave thee grace by looking upon thee, for which cause thou didst become glorious<sup>7</sup> and worthy of honour in My presence, thou hast merited more grace from My favours<sup>8</sup>—because for God to love more is for Him to grant more favours. This same thing the Bride declares to the other souls, in the Divine Songs, saying:<sup>9</sup> 'I am swarthy but beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem; wherefore the King has loved me and brought me into the interior of his bed.'<sup>10</sup> Which is as if to say: Souls, ye that know not neither are aware of these favours, marvel not because the King of Heaven has wrought them in me so wondrously as to bring me even into the interior of His love, for though of myself I am swarthy, so often did He cast His eyes upon me, after He had first looked upon me, that He was not content till He had betrothed me to Himself, and brought me into the inner bed of His love.

8. Who can describe the extent of the exaltation of a soul by God when He is pleased to take delight in it? It cannot even be imagined;<sup>11</sup> but briefly, He acts like God, that He may show Who He is. This can only be understood to any extent by that property<sup>12</sup> of God according

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 12–13.

<sup>2</sup> Sg: 'gratified.'

<sup>3</sup> Sg: 'and beautified ineffably.'

<sup>4</sup> On 'effects,' see p. 122, n. 1, above.

<sup>5</sup> [The reading in the text is that of S.] Jaén [which P. Silverio adopts] reads: 'now without them.'

<sup>6</sup> Isaías xliii, 4. Av: 'I have honoured thee by loving thee.'

<sup>7</sup> Sg: 'become gracious.'

<sup>8</sup> Sg: 'from My mercies.'

<sup>9</sup> S gives the Latin text, and reads: 'And the Church adds in her name: *Ideo* . . .' [The latter part of the quotation is from an Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as well as being a paraphrase of Canticles i, 3 (A.V., i, 4) hence the different readings. The former part is from Canticles i, 4: A.V., i, 5.]

<sup>10</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'into the interior cellar.'

<sup>11</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'It cannot be expressed or even imagined.'

<sup>12</sup> [Lit., 'by the property.'] Jaén reads *canción* ['stanza'] for *condición* ['erroneously,' says P. Silverio, who follows Bg here, as did P. Gerardo before him. But *canción* has also a popular meaning of 'mania,' 'insistent desire.']

to which He keeps giving more to him who already has more; and that which He keeps giving is by multiplication, in proportion to that which the soul had before. This He explains in the Gospel, saying: 'Whosoever hath, to him more shall be given, even till he reach abundance; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.'<sup>1</sup> And thus the money which the servant had who was not in the grace of his lord was taken from him, and given to one that had more money than had all the rest together who were in the grace of their lord.<sup>2</sup> Wherefore the best and the principal blessings of His house—that is, of His Church, both militant and triumphant—God heaps upon him that is His greatest friend, ordaining it so in order the more to honour and glorify him; even as a great light absorbs into itself many small lights. This God also explained in the above-mentioned passage of Isaías, according to the spiritual sense, where He speaks with Jacob and says: 'I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour; I have given Egypt for thy atonement, Ethiopia<sup>3</sup> and Saba for thee, and I will give men for thee and peoples for thy soul.'<sup>4</sup>

9. Well, therefore, now, my God, canst Thou look upon the soul, and greatly canst Thou prize her on whom Thou lookest, since with Thy look Thou dost leave in her the prize for which Thou prizest her and the pledges wherewith Thou art captivated;<sup>5</sup> wherefore not once alone, but many times, does she merit Thy looking upon her, since Thou hast looked upon her once; for, as is said by the Holy Spirit in the Book of Esther: 'Worthy of such honour is he whom the King is pleased to honour.'<sup>6</sup>

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE FOLLOWING STANZA

THE loving<sup>7</sup> gifts which the Spouse<sup>8</sup> bestows upon the soul in this estate are inestimable, and the praises and endearing words of Divine love, which with great frequency pass between the two, are ineffable. The soul is occupied in praising and thanking Him,

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew xiii, 12.

<sup>2</sup> [St. Matthew xxv, 14 ff.] S modifies: 'more money(s), so that he might have all of them together, (being) in the grace of his lord.'

<sup>3</sup> Some MSS. read: 'Egypt' for 'Ethiopia.'

<sup>4</sup> Isaías xliii, 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 344, n. 1, above.

<sup>6</sup> Esther vi, 11.

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'friendly,' but Spanish often uses 'friend,' 'friendly,' for 'love,' 'loving.' Ramon Lull's *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* is in Catalan *Libre d'Amic e Amat* (*Libro del Amigo y del Amado*). Cf. the quotation from Canticles i, 15, below, where the Spanish *amiga mía* ('my friend') is translated 'my love.']

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg read 'God' for 'the Spouse.'

and He in exalting,<sup>1</sup> praising and giving thanks to the soul, according as may be seen in the Songs, where He speaks with her and says: 'Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair, and thine eyes are a dove's eyes.'<sup>2</sup> And many other gracious words and praises each one in the Songs continually addresses to the other. In the last stanza, the Bride has just depreciated herself, calling herself swarthy and vile, and has praised Him as being fair and gracious, since with His look He has given her grace and beauty. And He, being accustomed to exalt whom He humbles, casts His eyes upon her as she has begged Him to do, and, in the stanza next following, is occupied in praising her, calling her, not 'swarthy,' as she called herself, but 'white dove,'<sup>3</sup> and praising her for her good qualities, which are those of a dove and of a turtle-dove. And thus He says:

### STANZA XXXIV

**The little white dove Has returned to the ark with the bough,  
And now the turtle-dove Has found<sup>4</sup> the mate of her desire on  
the green banks.**

#### EXPOSITION

2. In this stanza it is the Spouse Who speaks, singing of the purity which the Bride now has in this estate, and of the riches and the prize which she has won, through having prepared herself and laboured to come to Him. Likewise He sings of the great happiness which she has experienced in finding her Spouse in this union, and He describes the fulfilment of her desires and the delight and refreshment which she possesses in Him, now that the labours of this life and of the time past are over. He says, then:

#### The little white dove

3. He calls the soul a little white dove by reason of the whiteness and cleanness which it has received of the grace that it has found in God. And He calls it 'dove,' because He calls it this in the Songs, to

<sup>1</sup> Av, Bz: 'exalting in His turn.' A, G, Sg: 'giving thanks' [using a different word from that used further on].

<sup>2</sup> Canticles i, 14-15 [A.V., i, 15-16].

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'is occupied in calling her, not "swarthy," as she calls herself, but "dove."' Ej adds: 'or turtle-dove.'

<sup>4</sup> Sg, here and at the end of §4, reads: 'settled' for 'found' [destroying the sense of the stanza].

denote the simplicity and gentleness of its nature<sup>1</sup> and its loving contemplation. For the dove is not only simple and gentle, without gall, but it also has bright and loving eyes; for which reason, to indicate that quality of loving contemplation wherewith the soul regards God, the Spouse there said that it had a dove's eyes.<sup>2</sup> This dove, He says,

**Has returned to the ark with the bough,**

4. Here the Spouse makes a comparison between the soul and the dove from the ark of Noah, taking that coming and going of the dove to and from the ark as a figure of that which has come to pass<sup>3</sup> in the soul in this case. For, even as the dove came and went to and from the ark, because it found not where to rest its foot in the waters of the flood, until at last it returned to it with an olive branch in its beak, as a sign of the mercy of God in commanding the waters which had overwhelmed the earth to withdraw from it, even so the soul in such case, which left the ark of God's Omnipotence when He created it, has flown over the waters of the flood of sins and imperfections, found not where to rest its desire, and flown to and fro on the breezes of the yearnings of love to the ark of its Creator's bosom, yet has found no perfect entrance thereto<sup>4</sup> until God has caused all the waters of imperfections aforementioned to withdraw from the earth—that is, from the soul. Now it has returned with the olive branch (which is the victory that by means of clemency and mercy God has won over all things) to this happy and perfect recollection in the bosom of its Beloved, not only having won a victory over its opponents, but having also received the reward of its merits, for both these things are denoted by the olive branch. And thus does the little dove-soul not only now return to the Ark of its God, white and clean, even as it left that Ark when He created it, but it also brings something with it—namely, the branch, which is the reward and the peace that it has obtained through its victory over its own self.

**And now the turtle-dove Has found the mate of her desire on the green banks.**

5. The Spouse also calls the soul here a turtle-dove, because in this matter of seeking its Spouse it has been like the turtle-dove when it found not the consort that it desired. For the understanding hereof it is to be known that it is said of the turtle-dove that when it finds not

<sup>1</sup> A: 'of its heart.'

<sup>2</sup> Canticles iv, 1.

<sup>3</sup> A, B: 'which has happened to.'

<sup>4</sup> [The original has 'perfect recollection therein.' Cf. the use of the phrase below.]

its consort it neither sits upon the green bough,<sup>1</sup> nor drinks of clear or cold water, nor settles beneath the shade, nor joins with other companions; but when it is united with him it then has fruition of all this. All these properties has the soul, and it must needs have them in order that it may reach this bond and union with the Spouse, the Son of God; for it must proceed with such love<sup>2</sup> and solicitude that it rest not the foot of its desire upon the green bough of any delight,<sup>3</sup> nor desire to drink the clear water of any honour and glory of the world, nor must it desire to taste the coolness of any temporal consolation or refreshment,<sup>4</sup> nor desire to stay beneath the shade of any favour or protection that is of creatures; desiring in no wise to rest in aught, or to find companionship in other affections, and sighing ever for solitude from all things until it find its Spouse in complete satisfaction.

6. And since the soul in such case, ere it reached this high estate, went about with great love<sup>5</sup> seeking its Beloved, and finding no satisfaction in aught save in Him, the same Spouse sings here of the end of the fatigues of the Bride and the fulfilment of her desires, saying that at last the turtle-dove has found the mate of her desire on the green banks. This is as much as to say that the Bride-Soul now sits upon the green bough,<sup>6</sup> delighting in her Beloved; and that she now drinks the clear water of most high<sup>7</sup> contemplation and the wisdom of God, water which is cold, signifying the refreshment and delight that she has in God; and likewise settles beneath the shadow of His protection and favour,<sup>8</sup> which she had so greatly desired, wherein she is comforted, pastured and refreshed after a delectable and Divine manner, even as she declares joyously in the Songs, saying: 'I sat down under the shadow of Him that I had desired, and His fruit is sweet to my palate.'<sup>9</sup>

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**C**ONTINUING, the Spouse describes the contentment that He derives from the blessing which the Bride has obtained by means of the solitude wherein aforetime she desired to live, which is stability of peace and blessing unchangeable. For, when the

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'green tree.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg: 'with such care.'

<sup>3</sup> Sg: 'upon any green tree of delight.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'nor desire to taste it, or any temporal consolation or refreshment.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg add: 'and care.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'upon the tree.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G: 'most sublime.'

<sup>8</sup> G, Sg: 'and likewise [settles] beneath the shade of His favour and protection which she has in God.' Ej: 'and likewise sits beneath the shade of His protection, the which [shade] she . . .', etc.

<sup>9</sup> Canticles ii, 3.

soul becomes confirmed in the tranquillity of her single and solitary love for the Spouse, as this soul has done of whom we here speak, she reposes so delectably and so lovingly in God, and God in her, that she has no need of other means or masters to lead her to God, since God is now her guide<sup>1</sup> and her light. For He fulfils in her that which He promised through Osee, saying: 'I will guide her<sup>2</sup> into solitude and will there speak to her heart.'<sup>3</sup> Here He declares that it is in solitude that He communicates and unites Himself to the soul; for to speak to her heart is to satisfy her heart, which is not satisfied with less than God. And thus the Spouse says:

## STANZA XXXV

**In solitude she lived And in solitude now has built her nest,  
And in solitude her dear one alone guides her, Who likewise in  
solitude was wounded by love.**

## EXPOSITION

2. In this stanza the Spouse does two things. The first is to praise the solitude wherein aforetime the soul desired to live, saying that it was a means whereby she might find and enjoy<sup>4</sup> her Beloved, alone and far removed from all the pains and fatigues which she experienced aforetime, for, as she desired to support herself in solitude, far from all pleasure and consolation and support of the creatures, in order to reach the companionship of her Beloved, and union with Him, she merited to find possession of the peace of solitude in her Beloved, wherein she reposes, alone and far removed<sup>5</sup> from all the said troubles. The second thing that the Spouse does is to say<sup>6</sup> that, inasmuch as the soul has desired to be alone,<sup>7</sup> for the sake of her dear one, and far from all created things, He Himself, being enamoured of her because of this her solitariness, has taken care of her, received her into His arms, pastured her in Himself with all blessings and guided<sup>8</sup> her spirit to the high places<sup>9</sup> of God. And He says, not only that He is

<sup>1</sup> Jaén alone reads: 'her grace.' A has: 'her light, her guide and her law.' The other authorities all have: 'her guide.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'I will bear her.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'and enjoy.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit: 'removed,' but add: 'now.'

<sup>6</sup> [Lit., 'the second is to say.']

<sup>8</sup> Bg: 'and guarded.'

<sup>3</sup> Osee ii, 14.

<sup>7</sup> Jaén has: 'to give herself, alone.'

<sup>9</sup> [Lit., 'high things.']

now her guide, but that He does these things alone, without intermediaries—whether angels or men, or forms or images—inasmuch as the soul, through this solitude, has now true liberty of spirit and is not bound<sup>1</sup> to any of these means. And the line says:

**In solitude she lived**

3. The little turtle-dove aforementioned, which is the soul, lived in solitude before it found the Beloved in this estate of union. For the soul that desires God is in no wise comforted by any company soever, but all things make and cause within it greater solitude until it find Him.

**And in solitude now has built her nest,**

4. The solitude wherein the soul lived aforetime was its desire to be without all the things and blessings<sup>2</sup> of the world, for the sake of its Spouse, even as we have said of the turtle-dove. It strove to become perfect, and to acquire perfect solitude, wherein the soul attains to union with the Word, and consequently to all refreshment and rest. It is this that is signified by the nest which is here spoken of—namely, rest and repose. And it is thus<sup>3</sup> as though He were to say: In that solitude wherein aforetime she lived, working therein with labour and anguish, because she was not perfect, she has now set her rest<sup>4</sup> and refreshment, since she has now acquired this solitude perfectly in God. Of this says David, speaking spiritually: 'The bird has indeed found herself a house, and the turtle-dove a nest wherein to rear<sup>5</sup> her young.'<sup>6</sup> That is, an abode in God where she may satisfy her desires and faculties.

**And in solitude . . . guides her,**

5. This signifies: In that solitude which the soul has with respect to all things and wherein she is alone with God, He guides and moves her and raises her to Divine things—that is to say, He raises her understanding to Divine intelligence, since it is now alone and stripped of all other strange and contradictory intelligence; and He moves her will<sup>7</sup> freely to the love of God, for it is now alone and free from other affections; and He fills her memory with Divine knowledge, since it, too, is now alone and emptied of other imaginings and fancies. For, as soon as the soul disencumbers these faculties and voids them of all

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'is not tied.'

<sup>3</sup> S abbreviates: 'the nest which is spoken of. And it is thus.'

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'her nest.'

<sup>6</sup> Psalm lxxxiii, 4 [A.V., lxxxiv, 3].

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'all the blessings.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg: 'wherein to shelter.'

<sup>7</sup> A, B, Bg: 'and her will is moved.'

lower things and of all attachment to higher things, leaving them in solitude,<sup>1</sup> with naught else, God at once uses them for the invisible and Divine, and it is God Who guides the soul in this solitude, even as Saint Paul says concerning the perfect: *Qui spiritu Dei aguntur*,<sup>2</sup> etc. 'They are moved by the Spirit of God.' Which is the same as saying: In solitude there guides her

. . . her dear one alone

6. This signifies that not only does He guide her in her solitude, but that it is He Himself alone Who works in her, using no other intermediary. For it is the characteristic of this union of the soul with God in the Spiritual Marriage that God works in her and communicates Himself to her alone, not now by means of angels, as aforetime, neither by means of her natural ability. For the outward and inward senses, and all creatures, and even the soul herself, have very little to do with the receiving of these great and supernatural favours which God grants in this estate: they belong not to the ability<sup>3</sup> and natural working and diligence of the soul—He alone works them in her. And the reason for this is that He finds her alone, as has been said, and thus He will give her no other company, nor will He have her profit by any other, or trust<sup>4</sup> any other, save Himself only. And it is also fitting that, since the soul has now left all things and passed beyond all intermediaries, soaring above them all to God, God Himself should be her guide and the intermediary to Himself. Now that the soul has soared above everything, and is withdrawn from everything, none of these things is now of any profit or service to her that she may soar higher, save the Word Himself, which is the Spouse. And He, because He is so greatly enamoured of her, desires to be Himself alone the One to work the favours aforementioned.<sup>5</sup> And so He next says:

**Who likewise in solitude was wounded by love.**

7. That is to say, by the love of the Bride. For, not only does the Spouse greatly love the solitude of the soul, but He is most deeply wounded with love for her, because she has desired to remain alone, and far from all things,<sup>6</sup> inasmuch as she has been wounded with love

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'leaving them all.'

<sup>2</sup> Romans viii, 14.

<sup>3</sup> S: 'because they are not contained in the ability.'

<sup>4</sup> S: 'or have her trust.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'to work these Divine favours.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G omit the clause: 'because . . . from all things.'

for Him. And thus He would not leave her alone; but rather, wounded by her through the solitude wherein for His sake she lives, and, seeing that she is content with naught else, He alone guides her to Himself, draws her to Himself and absorbs her in Himself; which He would not do in her had He not found her in spiritual solitude.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**A** STRANGE characteristic of those that are in love<sup>1</sup> is this, that they are far more desirous of enjoying each other's society when they are alone together and withdrawn from every creature<sup>2</sup> than of doing so in the company of any. For, although they be together, yet if there be any strange company present with them, even though they would not converse and speak together if they were away from them any more than they do in their presence, and though these others speak not neither converse at all, their very presence is sufficient<sup>3</sup> to prevent the lovers from having pleasure and enjoyment in each other. The reason for this is that, since love is the union of two only, these two desire to commune alone. And now that the soul has been set upon this summit<sup>4</sup> of perfection and freedom of spirit in God, and the repugnances and contrarieties of its sensuality have been done away with, it has no longer aught to understand, or any other exercise wherein to employ itself, than the giving of itself up to the delights and joys of intimate love with the Spouse. It is written thus of holy Tobias in his book, where he says<sup>5</sup> that, after he had passed through the trials of his poverty and temptations, God illumined him, and that he spent all the rest of his days<sup>6</sup> in rejoicing.<sup>7</sup> And just so does this soul of which we are speaking spend them, since the blessings which it sees in itself give it such great joy and delight as Isaias attributes to the soul which, having exercised itself in works of perfection, has arrived at the point of perfection whereof we are speaking.

2. Here, then, speaking to the soul concerning this perfection, he says: 'Then shall thy light rise up in darkness, and thy darkness shall be as the noonday. And thy Lord God shall give thee rest for ever, and He shall fill thy soul with brightness, and shall deliver thy bones, and

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G have: 'of the lovers'; the other authorities: 'of the beloved.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg: 'from every joy.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg abbreviate: '... would not converse and speak, their very presence is sufficient,' etc.

<sup>4</sup> Sg has *costumbre* ['custom'] for *cumbre* ['summit'].

<sup>5</sup> S omits: 'in his book, where he says.'

<sup>6</sup> S: 'and that he spent all the remainder of his life.'

<sup>7</sup> Tobias xiv, 4 [A.V., xiv, 2].

thou shalt be like a watered garden<sup>1</sup> and like a fountain of waters, whose waters shall not fail. In thee shall be builded up the solitary places of ages and thou shalt raise up the beginnings and foundations of one generation and another generation; and thou shalt be called a builder up of the hedges, turning aside thy paths and ways into quietness. If thou turn away thy work from leisure and from doing thy will on My holy day, and call the leisure delicate and holy,<sup>2</sup> glorious, of the Lord, and glorify Him, doing not thy own ways and fulfilling not thy will, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will lift thee up above the high places of the earth, and I will pasture thee upon the inheritance of Jacob.<sup>3</sup> Thus far these words are from Isaias, wherein the inheritance of Jacob is God Himself.<sup>4</sup> And therefore, as we have said, this soul has a care to do naught save to enjoy the delights of this pasture; only one thing remains for it to desire—namely, to enjoy Him perfectly in life eternal.<sup>5</sup> And thus, in the following stanza, and in the rest which follow, the soul is occupied in entreating the Beloved for this beatific pasture in the clear vision of God. And thus she says:

## STANZA XXXVI

**Let us rejoice, Beloved, And let us go to see ourselves in thy beauty,  
To the mountain and the hill where flows the pure water; Let  
us enter farther into the thicket.**

## EXPOSITION

3. Now that the perfect union of love is made between the soul and God, the soul desires to employ and exercise herself in the properties which pertain to love, and thus it is she who speaks in this stanza with the Spouse, praying Him for three things which are proper to love. First, she desires to receive the joy and sweetness of love, and for this she prays Him when she says: <sup>6</sup> 'Let us rejoice, Beloved.' The second

<sup>1</sup> Bg: 'and shall fill thy bones and veins like a watered garden.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg abbreviates: 'if thou turn away thy work from leisure delicate and holy.'

<sup>3</sup> Isaias lviii, 10-14. Ej, G, Sg abbreviate: 'and I will lift thee up upon the inheritance of Jacob.'

<sup>4</sup> S abbreviates: 'I will pasture thee upon the inheritance of Jacob, which is God Himself.'

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'to enjoy Him in life eternal perpetually.'

<sup>6</sup> Av inadvertently omits the following passage: 'Let us rejoice . . . when she says.'

desire is that she may become like to the Beloved, and for this she prays Him when she says: 'Let us go to see ourselves in Thy beauty.' And the third desire is to delve into the things and secrets of the same Beloved, and to know them,<sup>1</sup> and for this she prays Him when she says: 'Let us enter farther into the thicket.' There follows the line:

**Let us rejoice, Beloved,**

4. That is to say, in the communication of the sweetness of love, not only in that which we already have in the habitual joining together and union of us both, but in that which overflows in the exercise of effective and actual love, whether interiorly<sup>2</sup> with the will in an act of affection, or exteriorly, in the performance of works belonging to the service of the Beloved. For, as we have said, love, where it has been firmly set, has this quality, that it desires ever to continue tasting its joys and sweetnesses, which are the exercise of loving interiorly and exteriorly, as we have said. All this the soul does that she may become more like to the Beloved, and thus she says next:

**And let us go to see ourselves in thy beauty,**

5. Which signifies:<sup>3</sup> Let us so act that, by means of this exercise of love aforementioned, we may attain to seeing ourselves in Thy beauty in life eternal: that is, that I may be so transformed in Thy beauty that, being alike in beauty, we may both see ourselves in Thy beauty, since I shall have Thy own beauty; so that, when one of us looks at the other, each may see in the other his beauty, the beauty of both being Thy beauty alone, and I being absorbed in Thy beauty;<sup>4</sup> and thus I shall see Thee in Thy beauty and Thou wilt see me in Thy beauty; and I shall see myself in Thee in Thy beauty; and Thou wilt see Thyself in me in Thy beauty; so that thus I may be like to Thee in Thy beauty and Thou mayest be like to me in Thy beauty, and my beauty may be Thy beauty, and Thy beauty my beauty; and thus I shall be Thou in Thy beauty and Thou wilt be I in Thy beauty,<sup>5</sup> because Thy beauty itself will be my beauty, and thus we shall each see the

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'and to desire to know them.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg alone have this word [which P. Silverio omits].

<sup>3</sup> There are many minor variants in this paragraph, due mainly to inadvertence, the playing upon words and phrases having confused the copyists. [The only changes that affect the translation are noted below.]

<sup>4</sup> S reads: 'absorbed therein.' Ej, G omit the following lines down to 'This is the adoption.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'and my beauty may be Thine, and Thine, mine; and thus I shall be Thou in it, and Thou wilt be I in this same beauty of Thine.'

other in Thy beauty. This is the adoption<sup>1</sup> of the sons of God, who will truly say to God that which the Son Himself said through Saint John to the Eternal Father: 'All My things are Thine and Thy things are Mine.'<sup>2</sup> He by essence, being the Son by nature; and we by participation, being sons by adoption. And thus He spake, not only for Himself, Who is the Head, but for His whole mystical body, which is the Church, and which will share in the very beauty of the Spouse in the day of her triumph, which will be when she sees God face to face; for which cause the soul here entreats that she and the Spouse may go to see themselves in His beauty.

### To the mountain and the hill

6. This means to the morning and essential knowledge of God, which is knowledge in<sup>3</sup> the Divine Word, Who, because of His height, is here understood by the mountain; as Isaias says, calling men to a knowledge of the Son of God, and saying: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.'<sup>4</sup> Again: 'The mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared.'<sup>5</sup> And to the hill—<sup>6</sup> that is, to the evening knowledge of God, which is the wisdom of God in His creatures and works and wondrous ordinances, which is here signified by the hill, since this wisdom is lower than that of the morning; but the soul prays for both morning and evening wisdom when she says: 'To the mountain and the hill.'<sup>7</sup>

7. When the soul, then, says: 'Let us go to the mountain to see ourselves in Thy beauty,' she means: Transform me in the beauty of Divine Wisdom, and make me like to It, which Wisdom, as we said, is the Word, the Son of God. And when she says: 'to the hill,' she is praying<sup>8</sup> God to inform her in the beauty of this other and lesser wisdom,<sup>9</sup> which is in His creatures and mysterious works, which also is beauty of the Son of God wherein the soul desires to see herself enlightened.

8. The soul cannot see herself in the beauty of God save by being transformed in the Wisdom of God, wherein she sees herself to possess that which is above and that which is below. To this mountain and hill the Bride desired to come when she said: 'I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense'<sup>10</sup>—meaning by the mountain

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G: 'addition.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G: 'knowledge of.'

<sup>3</sup> Isaias ii, 2. A, B do not quote the Scriptural passage.

<sup>4</sup> Jaén alone omits: 'And to the hill.'

<sup>5</sup> A, S: 'is telling.'

<sup>6</sup> Canticles iv, 6.

<sup>7</sup> St. John xvii, 10.

<sup>8</sup> Isaias ii, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ej, G omit §7 entirely.

<sup>10</sup> Sg: 'and lesser knowledge of wisdom.'

of myrrh the clear vision of God and by the hill of frankincense the knowledge of Him in the creatures, for the myrrh on the mountain is of a higher order than the frankincense on the hill.

### Where flows the pure water;

9. This signifies: Where the knowledge and wisdom of God, which here she calls pure water, are given to the understanding, for they cleanse and strip it of accidents and phantasies, and clear it of the clouds of ignorance.<sup>1</sup> The soul has ever this desire to understand the Divine truths in a clear and pure<sup>2</sup> way; and the more she loves, the more deeply she desires to penetrate them; wherefore she makes her third request, saying:

### Let us enter farther into the thicket.

10. Into the thicket of Thy<sup>3</sup> marvellous works and profound judgments, the multitude whereof is so great, and of such great variety, that it may be called a thicket. For therein is abundant wisdom, so full of mysteries that it can be called not only thick, but even curdled,<sup>4</sup> according as David says in these words: *Mons Dei, mons pinguis; Mons coagulatus.*<sup>5</sup> Which is to say: The mountain of God is a mountain thick and a mountain curdled. And this thicket of wisdom and knowledge of God is so profound and vast that, for all that the soul may know thereof, she can ever enter farther still, so vast is it, and so incomprehensible are its riches, according as Saint Paul exclaims, saying: 'O the height of the riches of wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments and incomprehensible<sup>6</sup> His ways!'<sup>7</sup>

11. But the soul desires to enter this thicket and incomprehensibility of judgments and ways, because she is dying with desire<sup>8</sup> to enter very far into the knowledge of them; for to have that knowledge is a priceless delight, exceeding all that can be felt. Wherefore David, speaking of their sweetness, said thus: The judgments of the Lord are true and have justice in themselves; they are more to be desired<sup>9</sup> and more coveted than gold<sup>10</sup> and than the precious stone of great worth;

<sup>1</sup> This is the reading of S. Jaén [which P. Silverio adopts] has: 'Where is given the knowledge and wisdom of God, which here she calls pure water, to the understanding, for [it is] clean and stripped of accidents and phantasies, and clear without clouds of ignorance.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G: 'clear and distinct.' Sg: 'clear and distinct and pure.'

<sup>3</sup> [P. Silverio reads 'my'—an apparent error. Cf. p. 158, § 6, above.]

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G: 'that it may be called a thicker, but even curdled.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxxvii, 16 [A.V., lxxviii, 16].

<sup>6</sup> B, Bg: 'and investigable [sic].'

<sup>7</sup> Romans xi, 33. Ej, G omit the Spanish text and only begin the Latin text.

<sup>8</sup> S: 'because she is moved by the desire.'

<sup>9</sup> [Lit., 'more desirable.'] S: 'more pleasant.'

<sup>10</sup> Ej, G here add: 'and silver.'

and they are sweet above honey and the honeycomb. So much so that thy servant loved and kept them.<sup>1</sup> Wherefore the soul greatly desires to be immersed in these judgments and to have a deeper knowledge of them; and to that end it would be a great consolation and joy to her to pass through all the afflictions and trials of the world, and through all else that<sup>2</sup> might be a means to her thereto, howsoever difficult and grievous it might be; and through the agonies and perils of death, that she might enter more deeply into her God.

12. Wherefore by the thicket which the soul here desires to enter may also very properly be understood the great number and multitude of trials and tribulations, whereinto this soul desires to enter, inasmuch as suffering is most delectable and most profitable to her; because suffering is a means to her of entering farther into the thicket of the delectable wisdom of God; for the purest suffering brings with it the most intimate and the purest knowledge,<sup>3</sup> and, in consequence, the purest and loftiest joy which comes from having penetrated into the deepest knowledge. So, not content with any manner of suffering, the soul says: 'Let us enter farther into the thicket.' That is to say, even to the perils of death, that I may see God. Wherefore Job, desiring this suffering in order to see God, said: 'Who will grant that my petition may be fulfilled and that God may give me that for which I hope, and that He that began me may destroy me and let loose His hand and cut me off, and that I may have this consolation, that He will afflict me with grief and will not pardon me?'<sup>4</sup>

13. Oh, that it might be perfectly understood how the soul cannot attain to the thicket and wisdom of the riches of God, which are of many kinds, save by entering into the thicket of many kinds of suffering, and by setting thereupon its consolation and desire! And how the soul that of a truth desires Divine wisdom first desires suffering, that it may enter therein—yea, into the thicket of the Cross! For this reason Saint Paul exhorted the Ephesians not to faint in tribulations, but to be very strong, and rooted in charity, that they might be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and the length and the height and the depth, and likewise to know the supereminent charity<sup>5</sup> of the knowledge of Christ, so as to be filled with all the fullness of God.<sup>6</sup> For the gate whereby one may enter into these

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xviii, 10-11 [A.V., xix, 9-11].

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'and through all the torments that.'

<sup>3</sup> Sg: 'brings with it the purest and most intimate pleasure.'

<sup>4</sup> Job vi, 8-9. [On 'destroy,' see p. 159, n. 5, above.]

<sup>5</sup> Ej, G: 'the supervenient charity.'

<sup>6</sup> Ephesians iii, 18 [13-19].

riches of His wisdom is the Cross, which is a strait gate. And the desire to enter therein belongs to few,<sup>1</sup> but the desire for the joys to which it leads belongs to many.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**O**NE of the principal reasons for which the soul desires to be set free and to see itself with Christ is that it may see Him there face to face, and its understanding may penetrate to the depths of His ways and the eternal mysteries of His Incarnation, which is not the least part of its happiness; for, as Christ Himself says through Saint John, speaking with the Father: 'This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, one only, true God, and Thy Son Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.'<sup>2</sup> Wherefore, even as the first thing that a person does, when he has arrived from afar, is to see and converse<sup>3</sup> with those<sup>4</sup> whom he greatly loves, so the first thing that the soul desires to do<sup>5</sup> when it attains to the vision of God is to know and enjoy the deep secrets and mysteries of the Incarnation and the ancient ways of God which depend thereon. Wherefore the soul, when it has ended saying that it desires to see itself in the beauty of God, says next the words of this stanza:

#### STANZA XXXVII

And then we shall go forth To the lofty caverns of the rock<sup>6</sup>  
which are well hidden,  
And there shall we enter And taste the new wine of the pomegranates.

#### EXPOSITION

2. One of the causes which move the soul most to desire to enter into this thicker of the wisdom of God and to have a deeper knowledge of the beauty of His Divine wisdom, is, as we have said, that it may pass on to a union of its understanding in God, according to the know-

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'belongs to persons desirous of suffering, and [therefore] to few.'

<sup>2</sup> St. John xvii, 3.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to converse with and see'.] Sg: 'to enter into and see.'

<sup>4</sup> [The form of the pronoun in Spanish is singular, but its meaning in the sixteenth century could be either singular or plural.]

<sup>5</sup> Av [for 'so . . .'] has: 'I mean that the first thing that [the soul] does and desires.'

<sup>6</sup> G: 'of the rocks.'

ledge of the mysteries of the Incarnation, as of the loftiest and most delectable wisdom<sup>1</sup> of all His works. And thus the Bride in this stanza<sup>2</sup> says that, after having entered farther into the Divine wisdom (that is, farther into the Spiritual Marriage which she is now enjoying, which will be in glory, wherein the soul will see God face to face and be united with this Divine wisdom, which is the Son of God), the soul will know the sublime mysteries of God and Man, which are sublimest in wisdom and are hidden in God; and that they will enter into the knowledge thereof, and the soul will be engulfed and absorbed in them, and that she and the Spouse will have pleasure in the sweetness and delight which is caused by the knowledge of them, and of the virtues and attributes of God, which are known in God through the said mysteries, such as justice, mercy, wisdom, power, charity, etc.

**And then we shall go forth To the lofty caverns of the rock . . .**

3. The rock of which she here speaks, according to Saint Paul, is Christ.<sup>3</sup> The lofty caverns of this rock are the lofty and high and deep<sup>4</sup> mysteries of the wisdom of God which are in Christ, concerning the hypostatical union of human nature with the Divine Word, and the correspondence to this which is in the union of men in God, and in the agreement which there is between the justice and mercy of God as to the salvation of the human race in the manifestation of His judgments. These judgments are so high and so deep that she very properly calls them lofty caverns; lofty,<sup>5</sup> because of the height of their lofty<sup>6</sup> mysteries, and caverns, because of the depth and profundity of the wisdom of God in them. For, even as caverns are deep and have many recesses, even so each of the mysteries that there are in Christ is most profound in wisdom, and has many recesses, which are His secret judgments of predestination and foreknowledge with respect to the sons of men. Wherefore she says next:

**. . . which are well hidden.**

4. So much so that, despite all the mysteries and wonders which have been discovered by holy doctors and understood by holy souls in this estate of life, there has remained much more to be said, and even to be understood, and thus there are great depths to be fathomed<sup>7</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G: 'most sovereign wisdom.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'in the Songs.'

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians x, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Ej, G, Sg: omit 'and deep.'

<sup>5</sup> So Ej, G, Sg, S: 'The other authorities omit 'lofty.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg, S omit 'lofty.'

<sup>7</sup> Ej, G: 'and thus there is far to go.' [This apparently extensive change is caused by the substitution of *andar* for *ahondar* in the original.]

Christ. For He is like an abundant mine with many recesses containing treasures, of which, for all that men try to fathom them,<sup>1</sup> the end and bottom is never reached; rather in each recess men continue to find new veins of new riches<sup>2</sup> on all sides, as Saint Paul said of Christ Himself in these words: 'In Christ dwell hidden all treasures and wisdom,'<sup>3</sup> whereinto the soul cannot enter and whereto it cannot attain, unless first, as we have said, it pass through the strait place<sup>4</sup> of exterior and interior suffering into the Divine wisdom.<sup>5</sup> For even that degree of these mysteries of Christ to which a soul may attain in this life cannot be reached save through great suffering and until it has received from God many favours, both in the intellect and in the senses, and until many spiritual exercises have been first performed by it. For all these favours are inferior to the wisdom of the mysteries of Christ, for all are, as it were, preparations for coming thereto. Wherefore, when Moses prayed God to show him His glory, He answered him that he would be unable to see it in this life, but that He would show him 'all good'<sup>6</sup>—all, that is, that in this life is possible. And it came to pass that, after setting him in the cavern of the rock, which, as we have said, is Christ, He showed him His back—that is, He gave him a knowledge of the mysteries of the Humanity of Christ.

5. Into these caverns of Christ, then, the soul indeed desires earnestly to enter, that it may be wholly absorbed and transformed and inebriated in the love of the wisdom thereof, hiding itself in the breast of its Beloved. For to these clefts He invites it in the Songs, saying: 'Arise and make haste, My friend, My fair one, and come into the clefts of the rock and into the cavern of the enclosure.'<sup>7</sup> These clefts are the caverns which we are here describing, and to which the soul refers, saying:

### And there shall we enter

6. There shall we enter—that is, into that knowledge and those Divine mysteries.<sup>8</sup> She says not: 'I shall enter alone,' which would seem more fitting, for the Spouse has no need to enter there again, but 'We shall enter'—that is, I and the Beloved; this in order to explain that it is not she who does this, but the Spouse with her; and over and

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G: 'however far men go.' [A similar change to that described in the last note.]

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G: 'many veins of many riches.' Sg: 'many new veins of many riches.'

<sup>3</sup> Colossians ii, 3.

<sup>4</sup> S: 'the thicket.'

<sup>5</sup> S omits: 'into the Divine wisdom.'

<sup>6</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 19.

<sup>7</sup> Canticles ii, 13–14.

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G: 'namely, into those Divine promises and that knowledge.'

above this, inasmuch as God and the soul are already united in this estate of the Spiritual Marriage whereof we are speaking, the soul does no work by itself without God. And to say: 'There shall we enter' is to say: There shall we be transformed—that is, I in Thee through the love of these delectable and Divine judgments aforementioned; for in the knowledge of the predestination of the just and the foreknowledge<sup>1</sup> of the wicked, wherein the Father prevented the just in the benedictions of His sweetness in His Son Jesus Christ, the soul is transformed after a most sublime and intimate manner<sup>2</sup> in the love of God according to this knowledge, giving thanks afresh to the Father and loving Him afresh with great sweetness and delight through His Son Jesus Christ; and this she does in union with Christ, together with Christ; and the sweetness of this praise is so delicate that it is altogether ineffable; but the soul speaks of it in the line which follows, saying:

**And taste the new wine of the pomegranates.**

7. The pomegranates here signify the mysteries of Christ, and the judgments of the wisdom of God, and the virtues and attributes of God which are known in God through the knowledge of these mysteries and judgments, which are innumerable. For, as the pomegranate has many small seeds, which have been born and are nourished in that one round orb,<sup>3</sup> so each of the attributes and mysteries<sup>4</sup> and judgments and virtues of God contains within itself a great multitude of wondrous ordinances and admirable effects of God, contained and nourished in the spherical orb<sup>5</sup> of virtue and mystery, etc., which belong to those effects. And we refer here to the spherical or circular shape of the pomegranate, because by each pomegranate we here understand some virtue and attribute of God, which attribute or virtue of God is God Himself, which is denoted by the spherical or circular figure, because it has no beginning or end. It was because there are such innumerable judgments and mysteries in the wisdom of God that the Bride said to the Spouse in the Songs: 'Thy belly is of ivory, set with sapphires';<sup>6</sup> by the which sapphires are denoted the said mysteries

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G: 'and the condemnation.'

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'in His Son Jesus Christ, in Whom He condemned the wicked in perpetual anathema and malediction, the soul is transformed after a most intimate and sublime manner.'

<sup>3</sup> See p. 163, n. 2, above.

<sup>4</sup> S omits: 'and mysteries.'

<sup>5</sup> Thus A, Av, B, Bz, S. Jaén: 'in the seraphic orb.' Sg: 'in the same spherical God.' Ej, G: 'in the same spherical orb of God.' Bg: 'in the orb of virtue.' [See also p. 163, n. 2, above. The word *seno* can also be translated 'bosom.']

<sup>6</sup> Canticles v, 14.

and judgments of the Divine Wisdom, which is here denoted by the belly, for sapphire is a precious stone of the colour of the heavens when they are clear and serene.

8. The new wine of these pomegranates, which the Bride says here that she and the Spouse will taste, is the fruition and delight of the love of God that in the knowledge and understanding of them overflows in the soul. For, even as from many pomegranate seeds there comes but one new wine when they are pressed, even so from all these wonders and grandeurs of God which are infused into the soul there overflows for her one fruition and one delight of love alone, which is the drink of the Holy Spirit; the which she offers at once to her God, the Word-Spouse, with great tenderness of love. For this Divine drink she promised Him in the Songs, if He granted her these kinds of sublime knowledge,<sup>1</sup> saying: 'There Thou shalt teach me and I will give Thee to drink of spiced wine and the new wine of my pomegranates.'<sup>2</sup> She calls them (that is, the Divine knowledge) hers, although they are God's, since He has given them to her. The joy and fruition hereof in the wine of love she gives to her God as a drink, and this is signified by:<sup>3</sup> 'We will taste the new wine of the pomegranates.' For as He tastes it, He gives it to her to taste, and, as she tastes it, she gives it back to Him to taste, so that they both taste of it together.

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**I**N these last two stanzas the Bride has been singing of the blessings which the Spouse is to give her in that eternal bliss—namely, that the Spouse is effectually to transform her into the beauty of His wisdom created and uncreated. And that He will transform her also into the beauty of the union of the Word with humanity, wherein she will then know Him, as well by His face as by His back. And now in the stanza following she says two things: first, she speaks of the manner wherein she is to enjoy that Divine 'new wine' of the sapphires or the pomegranates<sup>4</sup> whereof she has spoken; secondly, she sets before the Spouse the glory of her predestination which He will give her. Here it is well to note that, although these blessings of the soul are described one after the other, successively, they are all contained in the soul's one essential glory. She says, then, thus:

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'if He set her in these sublime knowledge(s).'] S: 'if He should make her to enter' for 'if He set her.'

<sup>2</sup> Canticles viii, 2.

<sup>3</sup> S abbreviates: 'since He has given them to the soul, and she returns them as her own to God Himself, and this is signified by.'

<sup>4</sup> S omits: 'sapphires or the.'

## STANZA XXXVIII

**There wouldst thou show me<sup>1</sup> That which my soul desired,<sup>2</sup>  
And there at once, my life, wouldst thou give me<sup>3</sup> That which  
thou gavest me the other day.**

## EXPOSITION

2. The end for which the soul desired to enter those caverns was that she might reach the consummation of the love of God which she had ever desired,<sup>4</sup> which is to come to love God with the purity and perfection wherewith she is loved by Him, in order to requite Him. And thus in this stanza she says to the Spouse that He will show her that which she has so greatly desired in all her acts and exercises, which is to show her how to love Him with the perfection wherewith He loves her.<sup>5</sup> And the second thing that she says He will give her there is the essential glory to which He predestined her from the day of His eternity. And thus she says:

**There wouldst thou show me<sup>6</sup> That which my soul desired,**

3. This desire of the soul is the equality of love with God for which, both naturally and supernaturally, she ever longs, because the lover cannot be satisfied if he feels not that he loves as much as he is loved. And as the soul sees that, notwithstanding the transformation in God which she is experiencing in this life, all the vastness of her love cannot succeed in equalling the perfection of love wherewith she is loved by God, she desires the clear transformation of glory, wherein she will succeed in equalling the said love. For, although in this high estate which the soul here enjoys<sup>7</sup> there is true union of the will, it cannot attain to the excellence<sup>8</sup> and strength of love which the soul will possess in that strong union of glory. For just as (in the words of Saint Paul) the soul will then know even as she is known of God,<sup>9</sup> so then she will also love God even as she is loved of Him. For even as her understanding will then be the understanding of God, and her will the will of God, even so will her love be the love of God. For, although

<sup>1</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'wilt thou show me.'

<sup>2</sup> [See p. 164, n. 1, above.]

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'wilt thou give me.'

<sup>4</sup> [*pretendido*. See p. 164, n. 1, above.]

<sup>5</sup> So S. The other authorities [followed by P. Silverio] have: 'wherewith He loves Himself.'

<sup>6</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'wilt thou show me.'

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'here has.']

<sup>8</sup> [*Lit.*, 'carats,' *quilates*, often used in Spanish metaphorically.]

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 12.

the will of the soul is not destroyed there, it is so strongly united with the strength of the will of God wherewith it is loved of Him that it loves Him as strongly and perfectly as it is loved of Him, the two wills being united in one sole love of God; and thus the soul loves God with the will and strength of God Himself, united with the same strength of love wherewith she is loved of God, which strength is in the Holy Spirit, in Whom the soul is there transformed; and since He is given to the soul to strengthen this her love, He bestows upon her and supplies in her, by reason of this her transformation of glory, that in which she is wanting. Even in the perfect transformation of this estate of marriage to which the soul attains in this life, wherein she is altogether clothed<sup>1</sup> in grace, she still loves so greatly after some manner through the Holy Spirit, Who is given to her in this transformation.

4. Herein it is to be noted that the soul says not here that He will give her His love there, although He does in fact give it to her (for she means to say here only that God would love her), but that He will show her there how she is to love Him with the perfection to which she aspires. Inasmuch as He gives her His love there, He shows her how to love Him as she is loved by Him; for, besides teaching the soul to love purely, freely and disinterestedly, as He loves us, God makes her to love with the strength wherewith He loves her, transforming her in His love, as we have said, and thus giving her His own strength wherewith she can love Him, which is like placing an instrument in her hands, telling her how to use it, and continually using it together with her—which is to show the soul how to love and to give her the capacity for loving. Until she attains so far, the soul is not content, nor would she be content in the next life, if, as Saint Thomas says in *opusculo de Beatitudine*, she felt not that she loves God as greatly as she is loved by Him. And, as has been said, in this estate of the Spiritual Marriage whereof we are speaking, at this season, although there is not that perfection of glorious love, there is a certain vivid vision and image of that perfection which is altogether ineffable.<sup>2</sup>

**And there at once, my life, wouldst thou give me<sup>3</sup> That which thou gavest me the other day.**

5. That which the soul here says that He would at once give her is

<sup>1</sup> Jaén, Av, Sg [followed by P. Silverio] have: 'altogether overflowing.' The other authorities read as in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Sg abbreviates: 'although there would not be that perfection of love which is altogether ineffable.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej: 'wilt thou give me.'

essential glory, which consists in the vision of<sup>1</sup> the Being of God. Wherefore, before we proceed farther, it behoves us here to settle one question, which is: Why, since essential glory consists in seeing God and not in loving, does the soul say here that this love, and not essential glory, was her aspiration, and why does she speak of this love at the beginning of the stanza, and then, as if it were something that she esteemed less, make her petition concerning essential glory? There are two reasons:<sup>2</sup> first, that even as the end of all things is love, which is subject to the will, whose property is to give and not to receive, and the property of the understanding, which is the subject of essential glory,<sup>3</sup> is to receive and not to give, so the soul, being here inebriated with love, puts not in the first place the glory which God is to give her, but rather the giving of herself to God, in surrender of true love, without any regard to her own advantage. The second reason is that in the first desire<sup>4</sup> the second is included also, and has been pre-supposed in the preceding stanzas; for it is impossible to attain to the perfect love of God without the perfect vision of God.<sup>5</sup> The difficulty in this question, however, is solved by the first reason, for through love the soul requites God that which she owes Him, and with the understanding she receives from God rather than gives.

6. Coming now to the exposition of these lines, let us see what day is that 'other' whereof the soul here speaks, and what is the 'that'<sup>6</sup> which God gave her on that day,<sup>7</sup> and which she begs Him to give her afterwards in glory. By that other day she understands the day of the eternity of God, which is 'other' than this day of time; in the which day of eternity God predestined the soul to glory, and therein determined the glory which He would give her, and gave it to her freely, without beginning, before He created her. And this 'that' is proper to this soul, in such wise that no happening or accident, high or low, will suffice to take it from her for ever; but she will come to possess without end 'that' to which God predestined her without beginning. And this is 'that' which He says He gave her on that other day, the which she desires now to possess openly<sup>8</sup> in glory. And what will be that which He will give her there? Eye has not seen it, neither has ear heard it, neither has it entered into the heart of man, as the Apostle says.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'in seeing.']

<sup>2</sup> Ej, G, Sg: 'two things.'

<sup>3</sup> Ej, G: 'the understanding, whose object is essential glory.' Sg: 'the understanding, for its object is essential glory.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'the first question.'

<sup>5</sup> B, Bg: 'the perfect union of God.'

<sup>6</sup> G, Sg: 'and what is that "other" and what is "that."'

<sup>7</sup> Av, Bz: 'on that other day.'

<sup>8</sup> Ej, G, Sg omit the words 'now' and 'openly.'

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 9.

And again Isaias says: 'The eye hath not seen, Lord, besides Thee, that which Thou hast prepared,' etc.<sup>1</sup> Here, since it has no name, the soul calls it 'that.' It is, in fact, to see God, but what it is for the soul to see God has no other name than 'that.'

7. However, in order not to fail to say something of 'that,' let us say what Christ said of it to Saint John in the Apocalypse, using many terms and words and comparisons,<sup>2</sup> on seven occasions; since 'that' cannot comprehensively be described in one word or on one occasion; because even after all those occasions much still remains unsaid. Christ, then, says there: 'To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of My God.'<sup>3</sup> But since this 'that' is not fully expounded in that phrase, He then uses another, which is: 'Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life.'<sup>4</sup> And, since this phrase does not describe it, He uses another which is more obscure, yet which explains it better, saying: 'To him that overcometh will I give the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone<sup>5</sup> and on the stone a new name written which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it.'<sup>6</sup> And, since these terms suffice no better to express 'that,' the Son of God goes on to use others of great delight and power. 'To him that overcometh,' He says, 'and keepeth my works unto the end, I will give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and they shall be broken to pieces like a vessel of clay, as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.'<sup>7</sup> And, not content with using these terms for the exposition of 'that,' He next says: 'He that overcometh after this manner shall be clothed in white raiment and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father.'<sup>8</sup>

8. But, since all that has been said still falls short, He then uses many terms to explain 'that' thing, the which terms contain within themselves ineffable majesty and greatness. 'Him that overcometh,' He says, 'I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more, and I will write upon him<sup>9</sup> the name of My God and the name of the new city of Jerusalem of My God, which cometh down out of Heaven from My God, and also My new name.'<sup>10</sup> And next He

<sup>1</sup> Isaias lxiv, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Apocalypse ii, 7.

<sup>3</sup> [*cálculo*.] Ej, G, Sg add: 'and the *cálculo* is a precious stone as red [*lit.*, 'as enkindled'] as a coal.' Jaén also has this addition, as a marginal note.

<sup>4</sup> Apocalypse ii, 17. Ej, G, Sg, S have: 'receiveth it' [as in A.V.]. The other authorities have: 'writeth it.'

<sup>5</sup> Apocalypse ii, 26-28.

<sup>6</sup> A: 'and I will write his name upon.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg omits: 'and comparisons.'

<sup>4</sup> Apocalypse ii, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Apocalypse iii, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Apocalypse iii, 12.

says the seventh thing to explain this 'that,' which is: 'To him that overcometh<sup>1</sup> I will give to sit with Me in My throne, as I also overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne. He that has ears to hear, let him hear,' etc.<sup>2</sup> To this point these are the words of the Son of God whereby He explains 'that'; which agree most perfectly with 'that' but yet describe it not; for a thing of such immensity has this property, that all excellent terms<sup>3</sup> that are of quality and greatness and good agree with it, but none of these describes it—nay, nor all of them together.

9. Let us now see if David says aught of this 'that.' In a Psalm he says: 'How great is the multitude of Thy sweetness which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee';<sup>4</sup> and elsewhere he speaks of 'that,' as of a torrent of pleasure, saying: 'Of the torrent of Thy pleasure Thou shalt give them to drink.'<sup>5</sup> And, because David finds not even this name to be sufficiently exact,<sup>6</sup> he calls it elsewhere a prevention of the blessings of the sweetness of God.<sup>7</sup> So that a name which exactly fits this 'that,' which the soul says is the bliss<sup>8</sup> to which God predestined her, cannot be found. Let us, then, keep the name of 'that,' which the soul gives it, and let us expound the line after this manner: 'that which Thou gavest me'—that is, that weight of glory whereunto Thou didst predestine me, O my Spouse, in the day of Thine eternity, when Thou wert pleased to determine to create me, Thou wilt give me there, on the day of my betrothal and my marriage, and in my day of the joy<sup>9</sup> of my heart, when, setting me free from the flesh and making me to enter into the lofty caverns of Thy bridal chamber, transforming me gloriously into Thyself, Thou mayest drink with me the new wine of the sweet pomegranates.<sup>10</sup>

#### ANNOTATION FOR THE STANZA FOLLOWING

**B**UT inasmuch as the soul in this estate of the Spiritual Marriage, whereof we are here treating, fails not to know something of 'that,' since, being transformed in God, it experiences something of it, it will not fail to say something of 'that' whereof it feels the pledges and the signs within itself already; for, as is said in the

<sup>1</sup> Here ends G. Ej adds the lines of Stanza XXXIII and ends also.

<sup>2</sup> Apocalypse iii, 21–22. Sg has: 'in His nuptial-chamber [*talamo*]' for 'in His throne.'

<sup>3</sup> Sg: 'excellent roads.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xxx, 20 [A.V., xxxi, 19].

<sup>5</sup> Psalm xxxv, 9 [A.V., xxxvi, 8].

<sup>6</sup> Sg: 'sufficiently exact for the thing.'

<sup>7</sup> Psalm xx, 4 [A.V., xxi, 3]. [By 'prevention' understand 'foretaste.' Cf. A.V.]

<sup>8</sup> Bg: 'is the fidelity.'

<sup>9</sup> Sg: 'of the glory.'

<sup>10</sup> Sg: 'Divine pomegranates.'

Book of Job,<sup>1</sup> Who can withhold the word which he has conceived within himself and not utter it?<sup>2</sup> And thus in the following stanza the soul is occupied in saying something of that fruition which it will then enjoy in the beatific vision,<sup>3</sup> describing, as far as is possible, what and of what nature will be that thing which will then come to pass.

### STANZA XXXIX

**The breathing of the air, The song of the sweet philomel,  
The grove and its beauty in the serene night, With a flame that  
consumes and gives no pain.**

2. In this stanza the soul describes and expounds that which she says the Spouse will give her in that beatific transformation, expounding it by means of five expressions. First, she says it is the aspiration<sup>4</sup> after her of the Holy Spirit of God, and her own aspiration after God. Secondly, jubilation before God in the fruition of God. Thirdly, the knowledge of the creatures and of the ordering of them. Fourthly, pure and clear contemplation of the Divine Essence. Fifthly, total transformation in the boundless love of God. The line, then, says:

#### **The breathing of the air,**

3. This breathing of the air is a property<sup>5</sup> which the soul says that God will give her there, in the communication of the Holy Spirit, Who, as one that breathes, raises the soul most sublimely with that His Divine breath, and informs and habilitates her, that she may breathe in God the same breath of love that the Father breathes in the Son and the Son in the Father, which is the same Holy Spirit that God breathes into the soul in the Father and the Son, in the said transformation, in order to unite her with Himself. For it would not be a true and total transformation if the soul were not transformed in the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, in a clearly revealed and manifest

<sup>1</sup> So S. The other authorities read: 'in the prophet Job.'

<sup>2</sup> Job iv, 2.

<sup>3</sup> So Sg. Bg: 'in the most blessed sight.' B: 'in the beatified sight.' The other authorities read: 'in the beatific sight.'

<sup>4</sup> [*aspiración*. Or 'breathing,' which word is used to translate the verbal noun *aspirar*, below.] Bg has: 'the explanation.' Sg: 'the aspiration of the air (of the Holy Spirit).' [The word *a*, rendered here 'after,' as befits the abstract 'aspiration,' is translated 'into,' at the end of the next paragraph, after the verb 'breathe.']

<sup>5</sup> See p. 168, n. 1, above.

degree. And this said breathing<sup>1</sup> of the Holy Spirit in the soul, whereby God transforms her into Himself, is so sublime and delicate and profound a delight to her that it cannot be described by mortal tongue, nor can human understanding, as such, attain to any conception of it. For even that which passed in the soul with respect to this communication in this temporal transformation cannot be described, because the soul united and transformed in God breathes in God into God the same Divine breath<sup>2</sup> that God, when she is transformed in Him, breathes into her in Himself.

4. And in the transformation which the soul experiences in this life, this same breathing of God into the soul, and of the soul into God, is very frequent, and brings the most sublime delight of love to the soul, albeit not in a degree revealed and manifest, as in the next life. For this, as I understand, was the meaning of Saint Paul when he said: 'Because you are sons of God, God sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying to the Father.'<sup>3</sup> This happens, after the manners described, to the blessed in the next life and to the perfect in this. And there is no need to consider it impossible that the soul should be capable of aught so high as to breathe in God as God breathes in her by a mode of participation. For, since God grants her the favour of uniting her in the Most Holy Trinity, wherein she becomes deiform and God by participation, how is it a thing incredible that she should also perform her work of understanding, knowledge and love—or, rather, should have it performed in the Trinity, together with It, like the Trinity Itself. This, however, comes to pass by a mode of communication and participation, which God effects in the soul herself; for this is to be transformed in the three Persons,<sup>4</sup> in power and wisdom and love; and herein the soul is like to God, for it was to the end that she might come to this that He created her in His image and likeness.

5. And how this comes to pass cannot be known, nor is it possible to express it, save by describing how the Son of God obtained for us this high estate and merited for us this sublime office, of being able to become sons of God, as says Saint John.<sup>5</sup> And thus He prayed to the Father, as says the same Saint John, saying: 'Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me may be also with Me where I am, that they may see the brightness which Thou gavest Me.'<sup>6</sup> That is to say, that they may work in Us by participation the same work which I do

<sup>1</sup> [*aspiración*. See p. 374, n. 4, above.]

<sup>3</sup> Galatians iv, 6.

<sup>5</sup> [St. John i, 12.]

<sup>2</sup> [*aspiración*.]

<sup>4</sup> Sg: 'in the three faculties.'

<sup>6</sup> St. John xvii, 24.

by nature, which is the breathing of the Holy Spirit. And He says further: 'I pray not, Father, only for these that are present, but for them also who through their teaching shall believe in Me, that they may all be one and the same thing; so that as Thou, Father, art in Me and I am in Thee, even so may they be one and the same thing in Us;<sup>1</sup> and I have given them the brightness which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one and the same thing, as We are one and the same thing; I in Them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfect in one; that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me';<sup>2</sup> namely, by communicating to them the same love as to the Son, though not naturally, as to the Son, but, as we have said, by unity and transformation of love. Neither is it to be understood here that the Son means to say to the Father that the saints are to be one thing in essence and nature, as are the Father and the Son; but rather that they may be so by union of love, as are the Father and the Son in unity of love.

6. Wherefore souls possess these same blessings by participation as He possesses by nature; for the which cause they are truly gods by participation, equals of God<sup>3</sup> and His companions. Wherefore Saint Peter said: 'Grace and peace be complete and perfect in you in the knowledge of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord, according as all things are given to us of His Divine virtue for life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us with His own glory and virtue; whereby He has given unto us most great and precious promises, that by these things we may be made companions of the Divine nature.'<sup>4</sup> Thus far are the words of Saint Peter, wherein it is clearly signified that the soul will have participation in God Himself, and that it will be performing in Him, in company with Him, the work of the Most Holy Trinity, after the manner whereof we have spoken, by reason of the substantial union between the soul and God. And, though this can be perfectly fulfilled only in the next life, nevertheless, in this life, when the estate of perfection is reached, as we say it is here reached by the soul, a clear trace and taste of it are attained, after the manner that we are describing, albeit, as we have said, this cannot be expressed.

7. O souls created for these grandeurs and called thereto! What do ye do? Wherein do ye occupy yourselves? Your desires<sup>5</sup> are mean-

<sup>1</sup> Sg omits the sentence: 'So that . . . in Us.'

<sup>2</sup> St. John xvii, 20-3.

<sup>3</sup> S: 'like unto God.' [The Spanish is here identical with that of the first redaction, which, on account of the great importance of the passage, is quoted on p. 169, n. 4, above.]

<sup>4</sup> 2 St. Peter i, 2-4.

<sup>5</sup> [See p. 170, n. 1, above.]

nesses, and your possessions miseries.<sup>1</sup> O wretched blindness of the eyes of your souls,<sup>2</sup> which are blind to so great a light and deaf to so clear a voice, seeing not that for so long as ye seek grandeurs and glories ye remain miserable and mean,<sup>3</sup> and have become ignorant and unworthy of so many blessings!<sup>4</sup> There follows the second thing which the soul says in order to explain 'that' thing, namely:

### The song of the sweet philomel,

8. That which is born in the soul from that breathing of the air is the sweet voice of the Beloved speaking to her, wherein the soul addresses to Him her own delectable jubilation; and both are here called the song of the philomel. For even as the song of the philomel, which is the nightingale,<sup>5</sup> is heard in the spring, when the cold, the rains and the changes of winter are all past, and makes melody to the ear and gives refreshment to the spirit, even so in this present communication and transformation of love which the soul now enjoys in this life, she is protected and freed from all temporal changes and disturbances, and detached and purged from the imperfections, penalties and mists,<sup>6</sup> both of sense and of spirit, and feels the new spring in liberty, enlargement and joy of spirit, wherein she hears the sweet voice of the Spouse, Who is her sweet philomel, by the which voice, refreshing and renewing the substance of her soul, so that it is now well prepared for the journey to life eternal,<sup>7</sup> He calls her sweetly and delectably, saying: 'Arise, make haste, My friend,<sup>8</sup> My dove, My beautiful one, and come; for the winter is now past, the rain has now gone far away, the flowers have now appeared in our land, the time of pruning<sup>9</sup> is come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.'<sup>10</sup>

9. This voice of the Spouse, Who speaks to the Bride in the inmost part of the soul, she perceives to be the end of her ills, and the beginning of her blessings; and in the refreshment and protection and

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'and your possessions, meannesses and miseries.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'O wretched blindness of the sons of Adam!' Sg: 'O pitiable blindness of the eyes of your souls!' Bg: 'What do ye do? Where do ye stop and occupy your faculties, mean desires and wretched possessions?'

<sup>3</sup> B, Bg, Bz: 'and empty.'

<sup>4</sup> A: 'miserable and deprived of so many blessings!' [The difference between this reading and that of the first redaction (p. 170) in the Spanish is one of punctuation only.]

<sup>5</sup> [See p. 170, n. 2, above.]

<sup>6</sup> [See p. 101, n. 4, above.]

<sup>7</sup> Sg: 'for the communication of life eternal.'

<sup>8</sup> [See p. 351, n. 7, above.]

<sup>9</sup> [*el tiempo del poder*. P. Silverio has *poder* ('be able') for *podar* ('prune'), an evident error.]

<sup>10</sup> Canticles ii, 10-12.

delectable feeling which this causes her she likewise lifts up her voice, as does the sweet philomel, in a new song of jubilation to God, together with God, Who moves her thereto. For this cause He gives her His voice,<sup>1</sup> that she may sing to God with Him, for that is His aspiration<sup>2</sup> and desire, that the soul may lift up her spiritual voice in jubilation to God. This is also the desire of the same Spouse in the Songs, where He says: 'Arise, make haste, My friend,<sup>3</sup> and come, My dove, into the clefts of the rock, into the cavern of the enclosure; show Me thy face, let thy voice sound in Mine ears.'<sup>4</sup> By the ears of God are here meant the desires of God that the soul may lift up to Him this voice of perfect jubilation; the which voice, that it may be perfect, the Spouse entreats the soul to send forth and cause to sound in the caverns of the rock—that is, in the transformation of the mysteries of Christ whereof we spoke above. For, because in this union the soul rejoices and praises God together with God Himself, as we said in speaking of their love, it is praise very perfect and pleasing to God, for the soul, being in this perfection, performs works which are perfect. And thus this voice of jubilation is sweet to God and sweet to the soul. Wherefore the Spouse said: 'Thy voice is sweet.'<sup>5</sup> That is to say, not only for thee, but also for Me; for, being at one with Me, thou dost raise thy voice as a sweet philomel in unison with Me.

10. Of this kind is the song which is sung by<sup>6</sup> the soul in the transformation which it experiences in this life, the delectableness whereof is beyond all exaggeration. But, as it is not as perfect as the new canticle of the life of glory, the soul, having some experience of it through this which it here knows,<sup>7</sup> forms some conception,<sup>8</sup> through the sublimity of this song, of the excellence of that which it will have in glory, which exceeds it beyond all comparison. The Bride thinks upon it<sup>9</sup> and says that 'that' which He will give her will be the song of the sweet philomel. And she then says:

### The grove and its beauty

11. This is the third thing which the soul says that the Spouse is to give her. By the grove, since it nurtures within itself many plants and animals, the soul here understands God, since He nurtures and gives

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'He gives His spiritual voice in jubilation.'

<sup>2</sup> [See p. 171, n. 1, above.]

<sup>3</sup> Canticles ii, 13-14.

<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'which passes in.']

<sup>5</sup> [rastreado: lit., tracking, following a track or clue (*rastro*). 'This song' is the 'track' by following which the soul gains some conception of the other.]

<sup>6</sup> [hace memoria de él: a phrase often used with this equivalence.]

<sup>7</sup> [See p. 351, n. 7, above.]

<sup>8</sup> Canticles ii, 14.

<sup>9</sup> [Lit., 'feels.']

being to all creatures, which have their life and root in Him; which is for God to show Himself and make Himself known to her as Creator. In the beauty of this grove, which the soul likewise entreats the Spouse to give her then, she prays for grace<sup>1</sup> and wisdom, and the beauty which not only each of the creatures, both terrestrial and celestial,<sup>2</sup> has from God, but which they make among themselves in the wise, ordered, gracious and loving mutual correspondence, both of the lower creatures among themselves, and of the higher likewise among themselves, and between the higher and the lower—a thing of which the knowledge gives the soul great beauty and delight. There follows the fourth thing, which is:

### In the serene night,

12. This night is contemplation, wherein the soul desires to see these things. She calls it night, because contemplation is dark, for which reason it is called by its other name, 'mystical theology,' which signifies secret or hidden wisdom of God, wherein without noise of words and without the aid of any bodily or spiritual sense, as if in silence and quiet, hidden by darkness from all that is of the senses and of nature, God teaches the soul after a most hidden and secret manner, without her knowing how; this is that which some spiritual men call 'understanding yet understanding not.' This is not done by the understanding which philosophers call active, the work whereof is in the forms and fancies and apprehensions of the bodily faculties; but it is done in the understanding inasmuch as this is possible<sup>3</sup> and passive: without receiving such forms, it passively receives substantial knowledge, stripped of all images, which is given to it without any work or active office of its own.

13. And for this cause she calls this contemplation night, wherein, in this life, by means of the transformation which it already has, the soul after a most lofty manner knows this Divine grove and its beauty. But, lofty as this knowledge is, it is nevertheless dark night by comparison with the beatific knowledge which the soul here entreats; wherefore, praying for clear contemplation, she asks that this enjoyment of the grove and its beauty, and of the other things which she has here entreated, may be in the serene night—that is, in clear and beatific<sup>4</sup> contemplation—so that it may no longer be night in the dark

<sup>1</sup> Sg: 'she understands grace.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg omits: 'both . . . celestial.'

<sup>3</sup> Sg has *possible* [a synonym of *passivo*, which follows].

<sup>4</sup> A: 'clear and serene and beatific.'

contemplation here below, but may turn into<sup>1</sup> the contemplation of the clear and serene sight of God on high. And thus to say 'in the serene night' is to say 'in clear and serene contemplation of the sight of God.' Wherefore David, referring to this night of contemplation, says: 'The night shall be my illumination<sup>2</sup> in my delights.'<sup>3</sup> Which is as though he had said: When I am in my delights of the essential sight of God, the night of contemplation will have dawned in the day and light of my understanding. There follows the fifth thing:

**With a flame that consumes and gives no pain.**

14. By the flame she here understands the love of the Holy Spirit. To consume<sup>4</sup> signifies here to complete and to perfect. When the soul, then, says that all the things which she has described in this stanza will be given to her by the Beloved and that she will possess them with consummate and perfect love, all of them being absorbed, and she with them, in perfect love which causes no pain, she says this in order to describe the complete perfection of this love. For, in order that it may be perfect, it must have these two properties—namely, that it may consume<sup>5</sup> and transform the soul in God, and that the enkindling and the transformation of this flame in the soul may not cause pain. This cannot be save in the beatific estate, where this flame is already sweet love;<sup>6</sup> for in the transformation of the soul therein there is beatific satisfaction and conformity on either side, and therefore there is no pain caused by difference between the greater and the less, as there was before the soul attained to the capacity of this perfect love. For, now that the soul has attained thereto, its love of God is so closely conformed to Him and so sweet that though God, as Moses says, is a consuming fire,<sup>7</sup> He is not so now, but a consummating<sup>8</sup> and a renewing fire. This new transformation is not like that which the soul experienced in this life; for, although the latter was most perfect, and effected the consummation of love, it was yet in some measure consuming and detractive, like fire upon coals; and though these coals be

<sup>1</sup> Bg: 'and delights in.'

<sup>2</sup> So A, Av, B, Bg, Bz. Sg: 'the serene night is my illumination.' Jaén: 'the serene night my illumination.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm cxxxviii, 11 [A.V., cxxxix, 11].

<sup>4</sup> [All the authorities have 'to consummate' (*consumar*), but 'to consume' (*consumir*) is certainly meant, as it is used in the line to be expounded and just quoted ('Con llama que consume . . .')]

<sup>5</sup> [Again, 'consummate' is used, this time with more reason. I keep 'consume,' however, on account of the context.]

<sup>6</sup> S omits: 'this cannot be . . . sweet love.'

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy iv, 24.

<sup>8</sup> [There is a play on words here between 'consuming' (*consumidor*) and 'consummating' (*consumador*).]

transformed and have become like to the fire, having none of that smoke<sup>1</sup> which they gave out before they were transformed in it, yet, although they have become perfected by the fire, it has nevertheless consumed them and reduced them to ashes. This comes to pass in the soul that in this life is transformed with perfection of love; for, although there is conformity, still the soul suffers some degree of pain and detriment; first, because of the beatific transformation which the spirit still lacks; and secondly, because of the detriment which is suffered by weak and corruptible sense from its contact with the fortitude and loftiness of love that is so great; for anything that is excellent is detriment and grief to natural weakness; for, even as it is written, *Corpus quod corrumpitur aggravat animam*.<sup>2</sup> But in that beatific life it will feel no detriment or pain, although its understanding will be exceeding deep and its love altogether boundless;<sup>3</sup> for God will give it capacity for the one and fortitude for the other, and will perfect its understanding with His wisdom and its will with His love.<sup>4</sup>

15. And since in the preceding stanzas, as in that which we are expounding, the Bride has prayed for boundless communications and knowledge of God, for which she needs the strongest and the loftiest love, in order to love according to the greatness and the loftiness of this knowledge, she here prays that they may all be contained in this love, which is consummate, perfective and strong.

## STANZA XL

**For none saw it, Neither did Aminadab appear,  
And there was a rest from the siege, And the cavalry came  
down at the sight of the waters.**

EXPOSITION AND ANNOTATION<sup>5</sup>

**T**HE Bride, then, now knows that the desire of her will is at last detached from all things and is clinging to her God with most intimate love; that the sensual part of the soul, with all its powers, faculties and desires, is conformed with the spirit;<sup>6</sup> and that

<sup>1</sup> A, Sg: 'that brilliance [i.e., of flame] and smoke.' B, Bg: 'that brilliance and beauty.'

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom ix, 15. ['The corruptible body is a load upon the soul.']

<sup>3</sup> Sg: 'will be exceeding deep, sweet and altogether boundless.'

<sup>4</sup> A omits the following paragraph. Sg heads it: 'Annotation for the stanza following.'

<sup>5</sup> Sg omits: 'and annotation.'

<sup>6</sup> Sg: 'conformed with the desire.'

its rebellions are quelled and are all over. She knows, too, that the devil is now overcome and driven far away by long and varied spiritual strife and exercise, and that her soul is united and transformed<sup>1</sup> with abundance of celestial gifts and riches; and that accordingly she herself is now ready and strong and well prepared to go up, leaning upon her Beloved,<sup>2</sup> through the wilderness of death, abounding in delights, to the glorious seats and resting-places of her Spouse. Desiring, then, that the Spouse will now bring this matter to a conclusion, she endeavours to move Him thereto, by setting all these things before Him in this last stanza, wherein she says five things. The first thing is that her soul is detached and far away from all things. The second, that the devil has now been conquered and put to flight. The third, that the passions are now held in bondage and the natural desires are mortified. The fourth and fifth, that the lower and sensual part of the soul has now been reformed and purified and has been brought into conformity with the spiritual part, so as not only not to be hindered from receiving spiritual blessings, but rather to be prepared for them, for, according to its capacity, it is already a partaker of those which it now has. And she says thus:

**For none saw it,**

2. This is as though she were to say: My soul is now stripped, detached, alone and far removed from all created things, both above and below, and has entered so far into interior recollection<sup>3</sup> with Thee, that none of the said things can come within sight of the intimate joy which I possess in Thee—that is, none of them by their sweetness can move my soul to desire them, nor by their wretchedness and misery to dislike and be troubled by them; for my soul is so far from them and in such deep joy with Thee that none of these things can come within sight of it. And not only so, but

**Neither did Aminadab appear,**

3. This Aminadab, in Divine Scripture, spiritually considered, signifies the devil, who is the adversary of the soul, and was ever giving her battle and disturbing her with the innumerable munitions of his artillery, that she might not enter into this fortress and secret place of interior recollection with the Spouse. When placed herein, the soul is so greatly favoured, so strong and so victorious with the virtues

<sup>1</sup> A adds: 'in God.'

<sup>2</sup> Canticles viii, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Sg: 'interior knowledge.'

that she has there, and with the favour of the embrace<sup>1</sup> of God, that the devil not only dares not approach her, but flees very far from her in great terror and dares not even appear. And because of the exercise of the virtues, and by reason of the perfect estate wherein she now abides, the soul has so completely put him to flight and conquered him that he appears before her no longer. And so (says the soul) neither did Aminadab appear with any right to hinder me from receiving this blessing to which I aspire.

**And there was a rest from the siege,**

4. By this siege the soul here understands its passions and desires, which, when they are not conquered and mortified, besiege it round about, giving battle to it on every side, wherefore she calls these the siege. From this siege she says, too, that there is now a rest—that is, that the passions are ordered by reason and the desires mortified. Since this is so, then, the soul begs the Spouse not to fail to communicate to her the favours for which she has prayed Him, since the siege aforementioned can no longer be a hindrance. This she says because, until the soul has its four passions ordered and directed Godward, and the desires mortified and purged, it is not capable of seeing God.<sup>2</sup> And there follows:

**And the cavalry came down at the sight of the waters.**

5. By the waters are here understood the spiritual delights and blessings whereof in this estate the soul has fruition inwardly with God. By the cavalry are here understood the faculties of the sensual part, both interior and exterior, for these carry within them the phantasms<sup>3</sup> and figures of their objects. These, says the Bride here, come down in this estate at the sight of the spiritual waters,<sup>4</sup> for the lower and sensual part of the soul is now so purified and in some manner spiritualized in this estate of the Spiritual Marriage that she, together with her sensual faculties and natural forces, is recollected, and has participation and fruition, after her manner, of the spiritual grandeurs which God is communicating to the soul, in the inmost part of the spirit, even as David signified when he said: 'My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So Jaén, A, Av, Bg, Bz, Sg. B, S: 'of the arm.'

<sup>2</sup> A, Bg read: 'they are not in peace [*en paz*] to see God' for 'it is not capable [*capaz*] of seeing God.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'the fantasies.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'came down in this estate to the spiritual waters or at the sight of them.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxxxiii, 3 [A.V., lxxxiv, 2].

6. And it is to be noted that the Bride says not here that the cavalry came down to taste of the waters, but that it came down at the sight of them. For this sensual part with its faculties has not the capacity to taste essentially and properly of spiritual blessings, either in this life or even in the next; but through a certain overflowing of the spirit they receive in the senses refreshment and delight therefrom, whereby these senses and faculties<sup>1</sup> of the body are attracted into<sup>2</sup> that interior recollection wherein the soul is drinking of spiritual blessings, which is to come down at the sight of them rather than to drink of them<sup>3</sup> and taste of them as they are. And the soul says here that they came down, and says not that they went, nor uses any other word, in order to signify that, in this communication of the sensual part to the spiritual, when the said draught<sup>4</sup> of the spiritual waters is tasted, they come down from their natural operations, from which they cease, to interior recollection.

7. All these perfections and dispositions<sup>5</sup> the Bride sets before her Beloved, the Son of God, with the desire to be translated by Him out of the Spiritual Marriage to which God has been pleased to bring her in this Church Militant, to the glorious Marriage of the Church Triumphant; whereto may the sweetest Jesus be pleased to lead all such as call upon His name, the Spouse of faithful souls, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, belong honour and glory, *in sæcula sæculorum*. Amen.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A, B omit: 'and faculties.'

<sup>2</sup> Sg: 'are drawn to.'

<sup>3</sup> A, Av, Bz: 'than to see them.'

<sup>4</sup> Sg: 'the said communication and draught.'

<sup>5</sup> Sg omits: 'and dispositions.'

<sup>6</sup> Sg adds: 'Laus Deo'; Av: 'Fr. Juan de la †'; A: 'End of the illumination, etc.'; Bg.: 'Jesus, Mary, Joseph.'

## APPENDIX

**Passages from the Granada Codex showing extensive variations from  
the Sanlúcar Codex.**

BEGINNETH THE EXPOSITION OF THE STANZAS BETWEEN THE BRIDE  
AND THE SPOUSE<sup>1</sup>

### STANZA THE FIRST

**Whither hast thou hidden thyself, And hast left me, O Beloved, to  
my sighing?  
Thou didst flee like the hart,<sup>2</sup> having wounded me: I went out after  
thee, calling, and thou wert<sup>3</sup> gone.**

#### EXPOSITION

**I**N this first stanza, the soul that is enamoured of the Word,<sup>4</sup> the Son of God, her Spouse, desiring to be united with Him through clear and essential vision, sets forth her love's anxiety, reproaching Him for His absence, the more so because, being wounded by her love, for the which she has abandoned all things, yea even herself, she has still to suffer the absence of her Beloved and is not yet loosed from her mortal flesh that she may be able to have fruition of Him in the glory of eternity. And thus she says:

#### **Whither hast thou hidden thyself?**

2. It is as though she said: O Word, my Spouse, show me the place where Thou art hidden. Wherein she begs Him to manifest His Divine Essence; for the place where the Son of God is hidden, as Saint John says, is 'the bosom of the Father,'<sup>5</sup> which is the Divine Essence, the which is removed and hidden from every mortal eye and from all understanding.<sup>6</sup> Which Isaias signified when he said: 'Verily Thou art a hidden God. Here it is to be noted that, however lofty are the communications with God of a soul that

<sup>1</sup> [See p. 31, n. 1, above.] The notes which follow show such variants as are to be found in Codices similar to that of Granada, i.e., those not included in the Sanlúcar version.

<sup>2</sup> Bj, Bz: 'like a hart.' 8,654: 'For thou didst flee like a hart.'

<sup>3</sup> Bj, Lch: 'wert already.'

<sup>4</sup> Bj omits: 'the Word.'

<sup>5</sup> [The Scriptural references are not given in the notes to this Appendix; they can be found in the Sanlúcar version above.]

<sup>6</sup> Md adds: 'in this life.'

is in this life, and the revelations of His presence, and however high and exalted is its knowledge of Him, they are not God in His Essence, nor have they aught to do with Him. For in truth He is still hidden from the soul, and it ever becometh the soul, amid all these grandeurs, to consider Him as hidden, and to seek Him as One hidden, saying: 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?' For neither<sup>1</sup> a sublime communication of Him nor a sensible revelation of His presence<sup>2</sup> is a clearer testimony of His presence, nor is aridity or the want of all these things<sup>3</sup> in the soul the less clear testimony thereof.<sup>4</sup> For which cause says the prophet Job: 'If He comes to me I shall not see Him; and if He departs, I shall not understand Him.' Wherein is to be understood that, if the soul should experience any great communication and feeling or knowledge of God, it must not for that reason persuade itself that it possesses God more completely or is more deeply in God; nor that that which it feels and understands is God in His Essence, however profound such experiences may be; and, if all these sensible communications fail, it must not for that reason think that God is failing it.<sup>5</sup> For in reality the one estate can give no assurance to a soul that it is in His grace, neither can the other, that it is outside it. So that the principal intent of the soul in the present line is not merely to beg for sensible and affective<sup>6</sup> devotion, wherein there is neither certainty nor evidence of the possession of the Spouse in this life, but to beg for the clear presence and vision of His Essence, wherein it desires to be certified and satisfied in glory.

3. This same thing was signified by the Bride in the Divine Songs when, desiring union with the Divinity of the Word her Spouse, she begged the Father for it, saying: 'Show me where thou feedest, and where thou liest in the midday.' For to enquire of Him where He fed was to beg that she might be shown the Essence of the Word, for the Father feeds upon naught else than His only Son. And to beg Him to show her where He lay was to beg that selfsame thing, since the Father lies not, neither is present, in aught save in His Son, in Whom He lies, communicating to Him all His Essence—'in the midday,' which is in Eternity, where He ever begets Him.<sup>7</sup> It is this pasture, then, where the Father feeds, and this flowery bed of the Word, whereon He lies hidden from every creature, that the Bride here entreats when she says: 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

4. And it is to be observed, if one would learn how to find<sup>8</sup> this Spouse, that the Word, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is hidden essentially in the inmost centre of the soul. Wherefore the soul that would

<sup>1</sup> The Granada MS., which lacks its first folio, begins with these words.

<sup>2</sup> Bj: 'His pre-eminence.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'or the want' only.]

<sup>4</sup> Lch: '... of His presence, and a presence to be feared, nor are aridities and the want of all these things' in the soul.'

<sup>5</sup> [See p. 32, n. 3, above.]

<sup>6</sup> Bz: 'and devotion.' Md: 'and devotion affectively.'

<sup>7</sup> Bz: 'where He begets.' Lch: 'where He is begotten.'

<sup>8</sup> Bj has *hablar* ['to speak (to)'] for *hallar* ['to find'].

find Him must go forth from all things according to the will, and enter within itself in deepest recollection, which is to hold<sup>1</sup> all things as though they were not. Hence Saint Augustine, speaking with God in the *Soliloquies*, said: 'I found Thee not without, because I erred in seeking Thee without that wert within.' He is, then, hidden within the soul, and there the good contemplative must seek Him, saying: 'Whither hast Thou hidden Thyself?'

**And hast left me, O Beloved, to my sighing?**

5. The Bride calls Him 'Beloved,' in order the more to move and incline Him to her prayer, for, when God is loved, He hears the prayers of His lover with great readiness; and then in truth He can be called Beloved when the soul is wholly with Him and has not its heart set on aught that is outside Him. Some call the Spouse 'Beloved' when He is not in truth their Beloved, because they have not their heart wholly with Him; and thus their petition before Him is of less effect.

6. And in the words which she then says: 'And hast left me to my sighing,' it is to be observed that the absence of the Beloved causes continual sighing in the lover, because apart from Him she loves naught, rests in naught and finds relief in naught; whence the man who indeed has love toward God will know it by this—namely, if he be content<sup>2</sup> with aught that is less than God. To this sighing Saint Paul referred clearly when he said: 'We<sup>3</sup> groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God.' This, then, is the sighing which the soul ever makes, for sorrow at His absence, above all when, having enjoyed some kind of sweet and delectable communion with Him, she has remained dry and alone. And so there follows:

**Thou<sup>4</sup> didst flee like the hart,**

7. It is to be observed that in the Songs the Bride compares the Spouse to the hart and the mountain goat, saying: 'My Beloved is like to the goat, and to the young of the harts.' And this because of the swiftness wherewith He hides and reveals Himself, as the Beloved is wont to do in the visits which He makes to the soul, and in the withdrawals and absences which He makes them experience after such visits. In this way He makes them to grieve<sup>5</sup> the more bitterly for His absence, as the soul now declares when she says:

**Having wounded me:**

8. Which is as though she had said: Not sufficient of themselves were the sorrow and grief which I suffer ordinarily in Thy absence: Thou didst wound me yet more, by love, with Thine arrow; and, having increased my

<sup>1</sup> Bj, 8,654, Lch, Md have 'esteeming' for 'which is to hold.' Bz has 'creatures' for 'things.'

<sup>2</sup> So Gr and 8,654. But Bj, Bz, Lch, Md read: 'with naught.'

<sup>3</sup> Bj, Bz, 8,654, Md: 'We ourselves.'

<sup>4</sup> 8,654: 'For thou.'

<sup>5</sup> Lch omits: 'after such . . . to grieve.'

passion and desire for the sight of Thee, didst flee with the swiftness of the hart and allowedst not Thyself to be in the smallest degree comprehended.

9. For the further exposition of this line we must know that, beside many other different ways wherein God visits the soul, wounding it and upraising it in love, He is wont to bestow on it certain enkindling<sup>1</sup> touches of love, which like fiery arrows strike and pierce the soul and leave it wholly cauterized with the fire of love. And these are properly called the wounds of love,<sup>2</sup> whereof<sup>3</sup> the soul here speaks. So greatly do these wounds enkindle the will in affection that the soul finds itself burning in the fire and flame of love, so much so that it appears to be consumed in that flame which causes it to go forth from itself and be wholly renewed<sup>4</sup> and enter upon another mode of being; like the phoenix, that is burned up and re-born anew. Of this David speaks and says: 'My heart was kindled and my reins were changed and I was brought to nothing and I knew not.' The desires and affections, which the Prophet here describes as reins, are all stirred, and in that enkindlement of the heart are changed into Divine affections, and the soul through love is reduced to naught, and knows naught save love.<sup>5</sup> And at this season there takes place this stirring of these reins, which is much like to a torture of yearning to see God—so much so that the rigour wherewith love treats the soul seems to it intolerable; not because it is wounded thereby (for aforesaid it held such wounds of love to be health), but because it is left thus grieving, and has not been wounded further, even to the point of death, in the which case it would see itself, and be united, together with Him in life. Wherefore the soul magnifies or describes her pain and says: 'Having wounded me.'

10. And thus there comes to pass this grief that is so great, inasmuch as when God inflicts that wound of love the will rises with sudden celerity to the possession of the Beloved, Whose touch it has felt. And with equal celerity it feels His absence and the sighing for it together. For these said visits that wound are not like others wherein God refreshes and satisfies the soul by filling it with gentle peace. But these visits He makes to wound the soul rather than to heal it, and to afflict rather than to satisfy, since they serve but to quicken the knowledge and increase the desire, and, consequently, the pain.<sup>6</sup> These are called wounds of love, and are most delectable to the soul, for the which cause it would fain be ever dying a thousand deaths from these lance-thrusts, for they cause it to issue forth from itself and enter into God. This the Bride expresses in the line following, saying:

**I went out after thee, calling, and thou wert<sup>7</sup> gone.**

<sup>1</sup> 8, 654 reads: *escondidos* ['hidden,' 'secret'] for *encendidos* ['enkindling'].

<sup>2</sup> Bj, Lch omit: 'And these . . . of love.'

<sup>3</sup> Md has 'of which wounds of love' for 'whereof.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz: 'and completely overflow.'

<sup>5</sup> Bj, Bz omit: 'and knows naught save love.'

<sup>6</sup> In Bj all the paragraph, as far as this point, is wanting.

<sup>7</sup> Bj, Lch: 'wert already.'

11. There can be no medicine for the wounds of love save that which comes from him that dealt the wounds. For this cause the soul went out, calling, after Him that had wounded her, because of the violence of the burning<sup>1</sup> that was caused by the wound. And it must be known that this going out is understood in two ways: the one, a going forth from all things, which is done by abhorring and despising them; the other, a going forth from herself, by forgetting herself, which is done by the love of God; and this raises her after such wise that it makes her to go out from herself and from her judgment<sup>2</sup> and the ways that are natural to her, and to call for God. And to this the soul here refers when she says: 'I went out after Thee, calling'; for both these, and no less, are needful, for one that would go after God and enter within Him. And it is as though she said: By this Thy touch and wound of love, my Spouse, Thou hast not only drawn forth my soul from all things, but likewise Thou hast made it to go out from itself (for truly it seems that He is drawing her away from her very flesh) and hast raised it up to Thyself, so that it cries for Thee and looses itself from all things that it may cling to Thee. 'And Thou wert gone.'

12. As though she had said: At the time when I desired to possess Thy presence I found Thee not, and I was loosed, yet I bound not myself to Thee; I was buffeted woefully by<sup>3</sup> the gales of love and found support neither in myself nor in Thee. This going forth of the soul in order to go to the Beloved, as the soul here terms it, is called by the Bride in the Songs to 'rise,' where she says: 'I will rise and will seek Him Whom my soul loveth, going about the city, in the streets and the broad ways; I sought Him and I found Him not.'<sup>4</sup> To rise up is here understood, spiritually, as of an ascent from the low to the high, which is the same as to go out from oneself—that is, from one's own low way of life and love of self to the high love of God. But she says that she was wounded because she found Him not. Thus one that is enamoured lives ever in affliction, in absence, for he is already surrendered, and has expectation of being paid by the surrender of the Beloved, which is not granted him. He has lost himself already for His sake, yet has found no gain to compensate him for his loss, for he lacks the possession of the Beloved. Wherefore, if a man goes about afflicted for God, it is a sign that he has given himself to God and that God loves him.

13. This affliction and sorrow for the absence of God is wont to be so great in those that are approaching ever nearer to perfection, at the time of these Divine wounds, that, if<sup>5</sup> the Lord provided not for them, they would die. For, as they have kept the palate of the will and the spirit clean, healthy and well prepared for God, and as in that experience whereof we have spoken He gives them to taste something of the sweetness of love, for which they yearn above all things, therefore do they likewise suffer above all

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'strength of the fire.']

<sup>2</sup> [See p. 36, n. 2, above.]

<sup>3</sup> [See p. 36, n. 4, above.]

<sup>4</sup> Canticles iii, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Lch abbreviates: 'is wont to be from these Divine wounds, so that, if . . .'

things. For there is shown to them in glimpses an immense good and it is not granted to them; wherefore their affliction and torment are unspeakable.

## STANZA II

**Shepherds, ye that go Yonder, through the sheepcotes, to the hill,  
If perchance ye see him that I most love, Tell ye him that I languish,  
suffer and die.**

### EXPOSITION

**I**N this Stanza the soul seeks to make use of intercessors and intermediaries with her Beloved, begging them to tell Him of her pain and affliction; for it is a characteristic of the lover, when she cannot commune with her Beloved because of His presence,<sup>1</sup> to do so by the best means that she may. And so at this point the soul would fain use her desires, affections and sighs as messengers, who are also able to make known the secrets of her heart. And thus she says:

#### **Shepherds, ye that go**

2. Calling the affections and desires shepherds, because they feed the soul on spiritual good things. For shepherd<sup>2</sup> signifies 'one who feeds,' and by their means God communicates Himself to her (which without them He does not). And she says: 'Ye that go.' That is to say, Ye that go forth from pure love; because they go not all to God, but those only that go forth from faithful love.

#### **Yonder, through the sheepcotes, to the hill.**

3. By the 'sheepcotes' she means the choirs of the angels, by whose ministry, from choir to choir, our sighs and prayers travel to God; Whom she here calls 'the hill,' because He is the greatest of all heights; and because in Him, as on the hill, are spied out<sup>3</sup> and seen all things, and the higher and lower sheepcotes; to Whom go our prayers, which the angels offer Him, as we have said; according as the angel said to Tobias, in these words: 'When thou didst pray with tears and didst bury the dead, I offered thy prayer unto God.' We can likewise understand by these shepherds of the soul the angels themselves, for not only do they bear messages to God but they also bring God's messages to our souls, feeding our souls, like good shepherds, with sweet inspirations and communications from God, which He also creates by means of them. And they protect us from the wolves, who are the evil spirits, and defend us from them like good shepherds

#### **If perchance ye see . . .**

<sup>1</sup> Bz: 'His absence.'

<sup>2</sup> [See p. 37, n. 1, above.]

<sup>3</sup> [See p. 38, n. 1, above.]

4. This is as much as to say: If my good fortune and happiness are such that ye reach His presence so that He sees you and hears you. Here it is to be observed that, although it is true that God knows and understands all things, and sees and observes even the least of the thoughts<sup>1</sup> of the soul, yet He is said to see our necessities, or to hear them, when He relieves them or fulfils them; for not all necessities or all petitions reach such a point that God hears them in order to fulfil them, until in His eyes the number of them is sufficient and<sup>2</sup> there has arrived the proper time and season to grant them or relieve them. And then He is said to see them or to hear them, as may be seen in the Book of Exodus, where, after the four hundred years during which the children of Israel had been afflicted in the bondage of Egypt, God said to Moses: 'I have seen the affliction of My people and I am come down to deliver them'<sup>3</sup>—though He had ever seen them. Even so Saint Gabriel told Zacharias not to fear, because God had already heard his prayer by giving him the son for which he had been begging Him many years; yet He had ever heard him. And thus it is to be understood by every soul that, albeit God may not at once hearken to its necessity and prayer, yet it follows not that He will fail to hearken at an opportune time—He Who is a helper, as David says, in due time and in tribulation, if the soul faint not and cease not from prayer. This, then, is signified here by the soul when she says, 'If perchance ye see . . .'; that is to say, 'If by good chance the time has arrived at which He sees well to grant them my petitions.'

**. . . him that I most love,**

5. That is to say: more than all things; which is, speaking spiritually, when naught that presents itself to the soul impedes her from doing and suffering, whatsoever it be, for His sake.

**Tell ye him that I languish, suffer and die.**

6 Three kinds of need the soul represents here, to wit: languor, suffering and death; for the soul that loves truly suffers ordinarily from the absence of God in three ways, according to the three faculties of the soul, which are understanding, will and memory. She says that she languishes in the understanding because she sees not God, Who is the health of the understanding. She says that she suffers as to the will, because she possesses not God, Who is the refreshment and delight of the will. She says that she dies as to the memory, because, remembering that she lacks all the blessings of the understanding, which are the sight of God, and all the delights of the will, which are the possession of Him, and that it is likewise very possible to be deprived of Him for ever, she suffers at this memory as it were death.

<sup>1</sup> Bj, Lch: 'even the very thoughts.'

<sup>2</sup> Lch omits: 'the number of them is sufficient and.'

<sup>3</sup> Bj, Lch: 'to alleviate them.'

7 These three kinds of need Jeremias likewise represented to God in the Lamentations, saying: 'Remember my poverty, the wormwood and the gall.' The poverty refers to the understanding because to it belong the riches of the wisdom of God, wherein, as Saint Paul says, are hid all the treasures of God. The wormwood, which is a herb most bitter, refers to the will, for to this faculty belongs the sweetness of the possession of God: lacking which, the soul is left with its bitterness, even as the Angel said to Saint John in the Apocalypse, saying that his eating of the book would make his belly bitter, the belly being there taken to mean the will. The gall refers to the memory, which signifies the death of the soul, even as Moses writes in Deuteronomy, when he speaks of the damned, saying: 'Their wine will be the gall of dragons and the venom of asps, which is incurable.' This signifies there the lack of God, which is the death of the soul; and these three needs and afflictions are founded upon the three theological virtues—faith, charity and hope—which relate to the three faculties aforementioned: understanding, will and memory.<sup>1</sup>

8. And it is to be observed that in the line aforementioned the soul does no more than represent her need and affliction to the Beloved. For one that loves discreetly has no care to beg for that which he lacks and desires, but only shows forth his need, so that the Beloved may do that which seems good to Him. As when the Blessed Virgin spake to the beloved Son at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, not begging Him directly for wine, but saying: 'They have no wine.' Or as when the sisters of Lazarus sent to Him, not to say that He should heal their brother, but to tell Him to see how he whom He loved was sick. And this for three reasons. First, because the Lord knows that which is meet for us better than do we ourselves; second, because the Beloved has the greater compassion when He beholds the necessity of him that loves Him, and his resignation; third, because the soul is on surer ground with respect to self-love and love of possession if she represents her need than if she begs Him, as she thinks best, for that whereof she believes herself to have need. It is precisely this that the soul does now, when she represents her three necessities. And it is as though she were to say: Tell my Beloved this: Since I languish, and He alone is my health, may He give me my health; and since I suffer, and He alone is my joy, may He give me my joy; and since I die, and He alone is my life, may He give me my life.

### STANZA III

**Seeking my loves, I will go o'er yonder mountains and banks;  
I will neither pluck the flowers nor fear the wild beasts; I will pass  
by the mighty and cross the frontiers.**

Md adds: 'although each one is not a proper subject for each of the three virtues.'

## EXPOSITION

**N**OT content with prayers and desires, and with making use of intercessors in order that she may find the Beloved, as she did in the preceding stanzas, the soul, over and above all this, sets to work herself to seek Him. This she says in this stanza that she must do: in the search for her Beloved, she must practise virtues and mortifications in the contemplative and the active life; and to this end she must accept no favours or good things,<sup>1</sup> nor must all the powers and snares of the three enemies—world, devil and flesh—suffice to detain and hinder her. So she says:

**Seeking my loves,**

2. That is to say, my Beloved.

**I will go o'er yonder mountains and banks;**

3. The virtues she calls 'mountains': first, by reason of their loftiness; second, because of the difficulty and toil which are experienced in climbing them, through the practice of the contemplative life. And she describes as 'banks' the humiliations and mortifications<sup>2</sup> and self-despising which she practises in the active life; for in order to acquire the virtues there is need of both. This, then, is as much as to say: Seeking my Beloved, I will ever put into practice the lofty virtues and abase myself in mortifications and things lowly. This she says, because the way to seek God is ever to be doing good in God, and mortifying evil in oneself, after the manner following:

**I will neither pluck the flowers . . .**

4. Inasmuch as in order to seek God it is needful to have a heart that is detached and strong, free from all evil things and from good things that are not simply God,<sup>3</sup> she speaks, in this present line and in those which follow, of the liberty and the courage which she must have. And herein she says that she will not pluck the flowers that she may find on the way, whereby she means all the pleasures and satisfactions which may be offered her, which are of three kinds: temporal, sensual and spiritual. And because they all occupy the heart, and, if the soul pays heed to them or abides in them, are an impediment to the reaching of the true spiritual road, she says that she will not pluck these flowers or set her heart upon them. And it is as if she had said: I will not set my heart upon the riches and good things which the world may offer me, nor will I accept the satisfactions and delights of my flesh, neither will pay heed to the pleasures and consolations of my spirit, in such manner as to be kept from seeking my loves over the mountains and banks.<sup>4</sup> And this she says because she is doing that which David counsels upon this road,

<sup>1</sup> Bj: 'or riches.'

<sup>3</sup> Md adds: 'or lead not to God.'

<sup>2</sup> Bj, Bz add: 'and subjections.'

<sup>4</sup> Bj, Bz: 'over the woods and banks.'

saying: 'If riches abound, set not your heart upon them'—that is, be not affectioned to them. This she understands of spiritual pleasures as also of other temporal blessings.<sup>1</sup> Here it is to be observed that not only do temporal blessings and corporeal delights and pleasures hinder and turn us aside from the road to God, but likewise spiritual delights and consolations, if we attach ourselves to them or seek after them, impede the road to the virtues. Wherefore it behoves him that will go forward not to turn aside for these flowers. And not only so, but it behoves him also to have the courage to say:

**. . . nor fear the wild beasts;**

**I will pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.**

5. In these lines the Bride speaks of the three enemies of the soul, which are world, devil and flesh, and these are they that war upon her and put difficulties in her way. By the 'wild beasts' she understands the world; by the 'mighty,' the devil; and by the 'frontiers,' the flesh.

6. She calls the world 'wild beasts,' because to the imagination of the soul that sets out upon the road to God the world seems to be represented after the manner of wild beasts, which threaten her fiercely, and principally in three ways. First, the favour of the world will leave her, and she will lose friends, credit and even property. Secondly, there is a wild beast no less terrifying—namely, that she must be able to bear the renunciation for ever of the satisfactions and delights of the world, and of all worldly comforts. Thirdly—and this is greater still—the tongues of men will rise up against her, and will mock her, and all will despise her. These things are wont to prejudice certain souls in such a way that it becomes supremely difficult for them, not only to persevere against these wild beasts, but even to set out upon the road at all.

7. But a few more generous souls meet other wild beasts, which are more interior and spiritual, in difficulties and temptations, tribulations and trials of many kinds, such as God sends to those whom He will prove as gold in the fire, even as in one place David says: That many are the afflictions of the just. But the soul that loves indeed, that prizes her Beloved above all things and trusts in the love of her Spouse and in His favour, will dare to say with courage: 'Nor will I fear the wild beasts.'

**I will pass by the mighty and cross the frontiers.**

8. Evil spirits, who are the second enemy of the soul, she calls 'the mighty,' because with a great display of strength they endeavour to seize the passes of this road, and likewise because their temptations and wiles are stronger and harder to overcome, and more difficult to penetrate, than those of the world and the flesh, and furthermore because they reinforce themselves with these other two enemies, the world and the flesh, in order to make

<sup>1</sup> Thus Gr, 8,654, Md. Bj, Bz: 'of sensual pleasures as of other temporal pleasures.'

vigorous warfare upon the soul. Wherefore David, in speaking of them, says of them: 'The mighty sought after my soul.' Concerning their might, Job says also: 'There is no power upon earth that can be compared with that of the devil, who was made to fear no one.' That is, no human power can be compared with his; and thus, only the Divine power suffices to conquer him and only the Divine light to penetrate his wiles. Wherefore the soul that is to overcome his might will be unable to do so without prayer, nor will it be able to penetrate his deceits without humility and mortification. Hence Saint Paul, in counselling the faithful, says these words: 'Brethren, put on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil, for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood.' By blood he means the world; and, by the armour of God, prayer and the Cross of Christ, wherein is the humility and mortification whereof we have spoken.

9. She also says that she will cross the frontiers, whereby she indicates the repugnance which of its nature the flesh has to the spirit and the rebellions<sup>1</sup> which it makes against it; the which flesh, as Saint Paul says, ever lusts against the spirit, and sets itself, as it were, upon the frontier, and resists those that travel on the spiritual road. And these frontiers the soul must cross, by surmounting these difficulties and, by the force and resolution of the spirit, overthrowing all the desires of sense and the natural affections; for, so long as these remain in the soul, the spirit is impeded by their weight so that it cannot pass on to true life and spiritual delight.<sup>2</sup> This Saint Paul set clearly before us, when he said: 'If by the spirit you mortify the works of the flesh, you shall live.' This, then, is the procedure which the soul says in this stanza that she must needs follow in order to seek her Beloved—namely, constancy and resolution not to stoop to pluck the flowers; courage not to fear the wild beasts; and strength to pass by the mighty; and she must determine only to go over the mountains and banks after the manner already expounded.

#### STANZA IV

**O woods and thickets .Planted by the hand<sup>3</sup> of the Beloved!<sup>4</sup>  
O meadow of verdure, enamelled with flowers, Say if he has passed  
by you.**

#### EXPOSITION

**A**FTER the soul has described the way wherein she will prepare herself for setting out upon this road, namely, by courage not to turn aside after delights and pleasures, and fortitude to conquer temptations and difficulties, wherein consists the practice of self-knowledge, which is the first

<sup>1</sup> Bj, Lch have (by an error) 'revelations.'

<sup>2</sup> Md adds: 'from which we exclude not that of grace—rather we assume it in one that is to journey to the perfection of the spiritual and mystical life.'

<sup>3</sup> Bj: 'by the hands.'

<sup>4</sup> Lch, Md, 8,654: 'of my Beloved.'

thing that the soul will achieve in order to come to the knowledge of God, she now, in this stanza, sets out upon her road, that of consideration and knowledge of the creatures, to the knowledge of her Beloved, their Creator. For, after the practice of self-knowledge, this consideration of the creatures is the first thing in order upon this spiritual road to the knowledge of God; by means of them the soul considers His greatness and excellence, according to that word of the Apostle where he says that the invisible things of God are known by the soul, through the knowledge of created things. The soul, then, in this stanza, speaks with the creatures, asking them for news of her Beloved. And it is to be observed that, as Saint Augustine says, the question that the soul puts to the creatures is the meditation that she makes by their means upon their Creator. And thus in this stanza is contained a meditation on the elements and on the other lower creatures, and a meditation upon the heavens and upon the other creatures and material things that God has created therein, and likewise a meditation upon the celestial spirits. She says:

### **O woods and thickets**

2. She describes as 'woods' the elements, which are earth, water, fire, wind;<sup>1</sup> for, like the most pleasant woods, they are peopled thickly with creatures, by reason of their great number and the many differences which there are between them in each element. In the earth, innumerable varieties of animals; in the water, innumerable different species of fish; and likewise in the air, many diversities of birds; while the element of fire concurs with all in animating and preserving them; and thus each kind of animal lives in its element, and is located and planted therein as in its own wood, the region where it is born and nurtured. And in truth, God so commanded when He created them: He commanded the earth to produce animals; and the sea and the waters, fish; while He made the air the dwelling-place of birds. Wherefore, seeing that thus He commanded and that thus it was done, the soul then says:

### **Planted by the hand of the Beloved!<sup>2</sup>**

3. The consideration is this: that these wonders and varieties could be made only by the hand of her Beloved. Wherefore she says intentionally 'by the hand . . .'; for albeit God performs many other things by the hands of the angels, He never performs the act of creation save by His own hand. And thus the creatures greatly move the soul to love her Beloved, for she sees that they are things that have been made by His own hand. And she says furthermore:

### **O meadow of verdure,**

4. This consideration is upon heaven, which she calls 'meadow of

<sup>1</sup> Bj, Bz, Lch, 3,654, Md: 'water, air and fire.'

<sup>2</sup> So Gr, 8,654. Lch, Md: 'of my Beloved.'

verdure,' because the things that are created therein never perish or wither with time; but, like fresh verdure, wherein the just take their pleasure and whereon they pasture, they are always unfading in their being; in the which consideration is likewise comprehended all the diversity of the stars and other celestial planets.

5. This name of verdure the Church gives likewise to heavenly things when, praying to God for the souls of the departed, and speaking to them, she says: May God set you among the delectable verdure.<sup>1</sup> And she says also that this meadow of verdure is likewise

**Enamelled with flowers,**

6. By these flowers she understands the angels and the holy souls, where-with that place is adorned and beautified like a graceful and costly enamel upon an excellent vase of gold.

**Say if he has passed by you.**

7. This question is the consideration spoken of above: Say what excellences He has created in you.

## STANZA VIII

**But, how, O life,<sup>2</sup> dost thou persevere, Since thou livest not where  
thou livest,  
And since the arrows make thee to die which thou receivest From the  
conceptions of the Beloved which thou formest within thee?**

### EXPOSITION

**A**s the soul sees herself to be dying of love, even as she has just said, and sees also that she is not dying wholly, in such a way as to be able to have the fruition of love freely, she makes complaint of the duration of her bodily life, by reason of which her spiritual life is delayed. And thus she addresses the life of her soul, laying stress upon this pain, saying: Life of my soul,<sup>3</sup> how canst thou persevere in this bodily life, since it is death to thee and privation of that wherein thou now livest in<sup>4</sup> love and desire? And especially since the wounds which thou receivest from the touches of the Beloved are sufficient to end thy life, as are also those of the vehement love caused in thee by that which thou feelest and understandest concerning Him—namely, the touches and wounds that slay with love?

**But how, O life,<sup>5</sup> dost thou persevere, Since thou livest not where  
thou livest,**

<sup>1</sup> G, V: 'celestial verdure.'

<sup>3</sup> [The word 'my' is omitted in the original.]

<sup>4</sup> [The word 'in' is omitted in the original.]

<sup>2</sup> Lch: 'O soul.'

<sup>5</sup> Lch: 'O soul.'

2. For the understanding hereof it is to be known that the soul lives where it loves rather than in the body which it animates, because it has not its life in the body, but rather gives life to it, and has its life in that which is loved by it. But beside this life of love, whereby the soul lives in whatsoever it loves, the soul has its natural life in God, according to that which Saint Paul says to us: 'In Him we live and move and are.' And as the soul sees that she has her natural life in God, through the being that she has in Him, and likewise her spiritual life, through the love wherewith she loves Him, she complains because she is persevering so long in the life of the body, for this impedes her from truly living where she truly has her life, through essence and through love, as we have said. The insistence that the soul lays upon this is great, for she declares that she is suffering in two contrary ways, in these two short lines, for that which is said in them is as much as to say: 'My soul, how canst thou persevere thus, since thou livest without living truly where thou livest through love?'

**Since the arrows make thee to die which thou receivest**

3. As if she had said: And, apart from what I have said, since thou perseverest in the body, where thou hast not thy life, how dost thou still persevere, since the touches of love which thou receivest in thy heart, from that which thou feelest and understandest in thyself concerning the Beloved, alone suffice to slay thee? For this is what is meant by:

**From the conceptions of the Beloved which thou formest within thee?**

4. That is to say, of the beauty, greatness and wisdom and virtues that thou understandest of Him.

## STANZA XIII

**The sonorous rivers,**

9. Rivers have three<sup>1</sup> properties: the first is that they assail and submerge all that they meet; the second, that they fill up low and hollow places that are in their path; the third, that their sound is such as to drown and take the place of all sounds else. And because in this communication of the Beloved the soul feels in herself these three properties most delectably, she says that the Beloved is the sonorous rivers. With respect to the first, it must be known that the soul feels herself to be assailed by the torrent of the Spirit of God in this case, in such a manner, and taken possession of thereby with such force, that it seems to her that all the rivers of the world are coming upon her, assailing and overwhelming all her passions and actions which she had

<sup>1</sup> Gr, by an oversight, omits: 'three.'

aforetime. Yet, though this is an experience of such violence, it is not for that reason an experience of torment; for these rivers are rivers of peace, even as the Spouse declares through Isaiah, saying: 'See, I will come down upon her like a river of peace and like a torrent which overflows with glory as it advances.' And thus He fills it wholly with peace and glory. The second property which the soul says that she feels is that this Divine water fills up the low places of its humility<sup>1</sup> and also fills the empty places of its desires, even as Saint Luke says: 'He fills the hungry with good things.' The third property that the soul feels in the sonorous rivers of its Beloved is a spiritual voice and sound which is above all sounds and above all voices, the which voice drowns and exceeds every other sound. And in the exposition hereof we shall have to occupy ourselves a little.

10. This voice or sonorous sound<sup>2</sup> of these rivers which the soul here describes is a fulfilment so great that it fills the soul, and a power so powerful that it possesses the soul and appears to her not merely as the sound of rivers, but as most powerful thunderings. But it is a spiritual voice and is unaccompanied by those physical sounds, and by the pain of other sounds, but is accompanied by grandeur and strength and delight; but it is as an immense sound and voice which fills the soul with power. And thus, in order to make manifest this spiritual voice which, at the coming of the Holy Spirit, was inwardly produced in the spirits of the Apostles, that sound was heard from without as a vehement wind, whereby was denoted the voice which the Apostles felt within themselves, which was, as we have said, a fulfilment of power and strength. And when once the Lord Jesus was praying to the Father in the peril and anguish which He suffered because of His enemies, even as is said in Saint John, there came to Him this inward voice from Heaven, strengthening Him according to His humanity, which the Jews heard from without, like a thunderclap, and thus some said that it was thunder, and others, that some angel had spoken to Him; the fact being that by that voice from without was denoted the strength and power which was given to Jesus, according to His humanity, from within. Whence it is to be known that the spiritual voice is the effect which the voice makes. It was this that David meant when he said: *Ecce dabit voci suæ vocem virtutis*. That is to say: See that He will give to His voice a voice of virtue. By this it must be understood that God is an infinite voice, and that the voice which He utters in the soul is the effect that He makes in it.

11. And this voice Saint John heard in the Apocalypse and he says that the voice that he heard from Heaven was *tanquam vocem aquarum multarum, et tanquam vocem tonitruī magni*. Which is to say: That the voice which he heard was as a voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder. And that it may not be inferred that this voice, because it was so great, was

<sup>1</sup> Lch adds: 'in order afterwards to raise it to greater glory.'

<sup>2</sup> [The word 'sound' does not appear in the original.]

harsh and disagreeable, he adds at once that this same voice was so soft that *erat sicut citharedorum citharizantium in citharis suis*. Which signifies: It was as of many harpers who harped upon their harps. And Ezechiel says that this sound as of many waters was *quasi sonum sublimis Dei*, which is to say: as a sound of the Most High God. That is, that He made His communication therein after a manner most high and likewise most gentle. This voice is infinite, for, as we said, it is God Himself Who communicates Himself, speaking in the soul: but He limits Himself by the capacity of each soul, uttering a voice of virtue such as befits its limitations; and He produces in the soul great delight and grandeur. For this cause the Bride said in the Songs: *Sonet vox tua in auribus meis, vox tua dulcis*. This signifies: Let Thy voice sound in my ears, for Thy voice is sweet. The line continues:

## STANZA XX

## EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza the soul makes answer to a tacit reproach<sup>1</sup> which might be addressed to her by those of the world, and which they are wont to direct to such as give themselves truly to God; they call them extravagant in their aloofness and queerness and in their general behaviour, and likewise consider them to be useless and lost with respect to all things that the world prizes and esteems. This reproach the soul meets in an excellent way, and very gladly faces both this and all else that the world can impute to it, taking little heed thereof when it has attained to living love; rather it glories and boasts of having done those things for the Beloved. And thus the Bride herself confesses them in this stanza, saying to those of the world that if they see her not in the places which formerly knew her, and following her former pastimes, they are to say that she has become lost to them and is withdrawn from them, and that she considers this so great a gain that she has herself desired thus to be lost in going after her Beloved, through works of virtue, and seeking Him, enkindled as she is with love for Him. And, that they may see how great a gain to her is this loss, and may not judge it to be delusion, she says that this loss was her gain and that she became lost of set purpose.

## STANZA XXIV

**Despise me not, For, if thou didst find me swarthy,  
Now canst thou indeed look upon me,<sup>2</sup> Since thou didst look upon me  
and leave in me grace and beauty.**

<sup>1</sup> Bj: 'to a tacit objection or reproach.' Bz: 'to a tacit obligation or reproach.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'Now wilt thou indeed be able to look upon me.'

## EXPOSITION

**T**HE Bride now takes courage; and, esteeming herself with respect to the pledges and the reward which she has of her Beloved (seeing that, since these things come from Him, though she of herself is of little worth and merits no esteem, she merits to be esteemed because of them), makes bold to speak to her Beloved, begging Him not to despise her or hold her of no worth, since if she once merited this by reason of the baseness of her fault and the wretchedness of her nature, now, since first He looked upon her and adorned her with His grace and clothed her with His beauty, He may well look upon her for the second time, and many times more, and increase her grace and beauty, since there is reason and cause sufficient for this in His having looked upon her when she merited it not neither had the means of doing so.

**Despise me not,**

2. As though she had said: Since this is so, do Thou not hold me as of little worth.

**For, if thou didst find me swarthy,**

3. For if, ere Thou lookedst upon me, Thou didst find in me baseness of faults and imperfections and wretchedness as to my condition<sup>1</sup> by nature,

**Now canst thou indeed look upon me, Since thou didst look upon me**

4. Since Thou didst look upon me,<sup>2</sup> and take from me that miserable swarthy colour wherewith I was not fit to be seen, now canst Thou look upon me indeed, again and again; since not alone didst Thou take from me my swarthy when first Thou lookedst upon me, but likewise Thou didst make me worthier to be seen, for Thou didst

**Leave in me grace and beauty.**

5. Greatly pleasing to God is the soul that has His grace,<sup>3</sup> since He abides, well pleased, within her, and she is exalted in Him; wherefore He loves her with an ineffable love, and communicates to her ever more love and gifts in all her seasons<sup>4</sup> and works; for the soul attains much that has reached a lofty estate of love and is honoured in God. And thus God declares in speaking with Jacob His friend in the Book of Isaias,<sup>5</sup> saying: *Ex quo honorabilis factus es in oculis meis, et gloriosus, ego dilexi te.* Which signifies: Since thou hast become honourable and glorious in Mine eyes, I loved thee; that is, thou hast merited more love from Me, and therein more grace from My

<sup>1</sup> Lch: 'my consideration.'

<sup>2</sup> Md omits: 'Since Thou didst look upon me.'

<sup>3</sup> Md: 'the soul to whom He has given His grace.'

<sup>4</sup> Bj, Bz: 'actions' for 'seasons.'

<sup>5</sup> [Lit., 'through Isaias.']

favours, through the honour and beauty of glory which thou hadst of Me.

This the Bride also declares in the Songs, saying to the daughters of Jerusalem: *Nigra sunt sed formosa filiae Jerusalem, ideo dilexit me rex et introduxit me in cubiculum suum.* Which is to say: I am swarthy, daughters of Jerusalem, but beautiful; wherefore the King has loved me and brought me into the interior of his bed. That is to say: Though of myself I am swarthy, I am beautiful through Him, and therefore He communicated more love to me and brought me farther within, granting me greater favours.

6. Well, my God, canst Thou now look upon me, since Thou didst look upon me, and with Thy first look didst leave in me grace and beauty of honour and glory and riches.

## STANZA XXV

**Catch us the foxes, For our vineyard is now in flower,<sup>1</sup>  
While we make a bunch<sup>2</sup> of roses, And let none appear upon the hill.<sup>3</sup>**

### EXPOSITION

**T**HE Bride, seeing that the virtues of her soul have now reached the point of perfection, so that she is now enjoying their delight and sweetness<sup>4</sup> and fragrance,<sup>5</sup> even as one enjoys the beauty and fragrance of plants when they are flowering, longs to continue this sweetness and desires that there may be naught to intercept and hinder<sup>6</sup> her from so doing. In this stanza, therefore, she begs that all those things may be caught and kept from her that may tear down and crumple<sup>7</sup> the flower of her virtues—as, for example, all the disturbances, temptations, causes of unrest, desires, imaginations and other motions, which are wont to keep from the soul inward sweetness and quiet and peace, at the time when the soul is wont to be most contentedly enjoying all the virtues together, in her Beloved. For the soul is wont at times in her spirit to see all the virtues which God has given to her (when He gives her that light), and then with wondrous delight and fragrance of love she gathers them all together and offers them to the Beloved as it were a bunch of flowers. In accepting them—and accept them indeed He does—the Beloved at the same time accepts a great service; for together with the virtues the soul offers herself, which is the greatest service that she can render Him; and this delight that the soul receives from this kind of gift which she makes to the Beloved is one of the greatest delights

<sup>1</sup> Bz: 'is now flowering.'

<sup>3</sup> Lch: 'upon the countryside.'

<sup>5</sup> Bj, Bz: 'sweetness and glory.'

<sup>7</sup> Bz: 'tear down and smother.'

<sup>2</sup> [See p. 123, n. 4, above.]

<sup>4</sup> Lch: 'delight and wisdom.'

<sup>6</sup> Lch: 'hinder and withdraw.'

that she is wont to receive in her intercourse with God. Thus the Bride desires that naught may hinder her from this inward delight, which is the flowering vineyard, and desires that not only may these things aforementioned be taken from her, but that likewise she may be withdrawn far from all things,<sup>1</sup> so that in all her exterior and interior desires and faculties there may be no form or image or other such thing to appear and present itself before the soul and the Beloved, who, withdrawn from all else and united with each other, are making this nosegay and having joy therein.

**Catch us the foxes, For our vineyard is now in flower,<sup>2</sup>**

2. The vineyard is the nursery of all the virtues, which is in the soul and which gives to the soul a wine of sweet savour. This vineyard of the soul is flowering when in the union of the will with the Beloved the soul is delighting itself and rejoicing in all these virtues together; and at this season there are wont to resort to the imaginative memory many and various forms and imaginations, and in the sensual part of the soul are many and various motions and desires which make the soul uneasy, and, by their great subtlety and agility, cause it to lose the pleasure and sweetness wherein at that time it is rejoicing, and trouble it greatly. And at this time there are wont to be many disturbances and horrors and fears,<sup>3</sup> which evil spirits are wont to set in the soul, and all these things she here calls foxes. For, even as the agile little foxes, with their subtle bounds, are in the habit of tearing down and maltreating the blossom of the vineyards, even so do these imaginations and motions, with their nimbleness,<sup>4</sup> keep from the soul, and tear down, the flower of sweetness, which, as we have said, the soul is enjoying; and also because, just as the foxes are malicious and shrewd in doing harm, even so do these imaginations and the evil spirits with them contrive to injure and tear down the flower of the soul's sweetness, so that it may give no fruit.

3. This same request is made by the Bride in the Songs, where she says: *Capite nobis vulpes parvulas, quæ demoluntur vineas: nam vinea nostra floruit.* Which is to say: Drive us away the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyard is flowering. And for that reason the soul desires them to be driven away, and likewise so that there may be room to do that which follows, namely:

**While we make a bunch of roses,**

4. At this season wherein the soul is taking her delight, upon the breast of her Beloved, in the flower of this vineyard, it comes to pass that the virtues stand out clearly to view, as we have said, and are at their best, showing to the soul and bestowing upon her their fragrance and sweetness, in the soul

<sup>1</sup> Lch omits: 'but that . . . all things.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'is now flowering.' Bj: 'is now full-flowering.'

<sup>3</sup> Lch, 8,654 omit: 'and fears.'

<sup>4</sup> Lch, 8,654, Bz: 'nimbleness and lightness.' Md: 'lightness and nimbleness.'

herself and in God, so that they seem to the soul to be a vineyard full-flowering, of the virtues and of the Beloved, and then she gathers them all together, and in each one of them and in all of them together makes most delectable acts of love. And so she offers these to the Beloved all together with great tenderness of love and sweetness; wherein the Beloved aids her; wherefore she says: 'We make a nosegay'—that is to say, He and I.

5. And thus this gathering together of virtues is like a cone or nosegay of roses,<sup>1</sup> because, even as a pine-cone<sup>2</sup> is strong<sup>3</sup> and contains within itself many pieces, strong and strongly bound together, which are the pine-kernels, even so this cone or nosegay which the soul makes for her Beloved is one single perfection of the soul, which firmly and in an ordered manner embraces within itself many perfections of virtues which are very strong, and gifts which are very precious, for all the perfections of virtues<sup>4</sup> are combined and ordered into one firm perfection of the soul. Inasmuch as this perfection is being formed and offered to the Beloved in the spirit, it is fitting that the foxes be driven away. And not only so, but likewise

### And let none appear upon the hill.<sup>5</sup>

6. This Divine interior exercise also requires withdrawal and detachment from all things that might present themselves to the soul, whether from the lower part, which is that of the senses, or from the higher part, which is that of the reason, which are the parts wherein are comprised the entire harmony of the faculties and senses of the whole man, which she here calls a hill. She begs that none may appear thereon, that is to say, that no forms or figures or objects or other natural operations may appear in the faculties and senses,<sup>6</sup> because in this case, if the inward and outward senses work, they cause disturbance; so also let no other of her operations and exercises appear in the spiritual faculties, for when the soul reaches the delight<sup>7</sup> of union of love, the spiritual faculties no longer work, neither is it fitting that they should work, since the work of union is now done through love,<sup>8</sup> even as, when the end is reached, the means cease. Let none, then, appear upon the hill; let the will alone be present before the Beloved after the manner aforementioned.

<sup>1</sup> [See p. 123, n. 4, above.]

<sup>2</sup> [*piña*.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'a strong piece.' Cf. the following clause.]

<sup>4</sup> *Lch.*: 'of virtues and gifts.'

<sup>5</sup> *Lch.*: 'upon the countryside.'

<sup>6</sup> For *sentidos* ['senses'], Bj, Bz, Lch, 8,654, Md read: *sentidos sensitivos* ['senses of sense'].]

<sup>7</sup> Md reads: *al saber* ['the knowledge'] for *al sabor* ['the delight'].

<sup>8</sup> Md: 'is now done through loving that which is understood.'

## STANZA XXXVIII

## The breathing of the air,

2. This property<sup>1</sup> for which the soul prays so that she may love perfectly she here calls the breathing of the air, because it is a most delicate touch and feeling<sup>2</sup> which the soul feels at this time in the communication of the Holy Spirit; Who, sublimely breathing with that His Divine breath, raises the soul and informs her that she may breathe into God the same breath of love that the Father breathes<sup>3</sup> into the Son and the Son into the Father, which is the same<sup>4</sup> Holy Spirit that they breathe into her<sup>5</sup> in the said transformation. For it would not be a true transformation if the soul were not united and transformed also in the Holy Spirit, albeit not in a degree revealed and manifest,<sup>6</sup> by reason of the lowliness of this life. This is for the soul of such great glory and delight that it cannot be described by mortal tongue, neither does human understanding attain to any conception of it.<sup>7</sup>

3. But the soul that is united and transformed in God breathes in God into God the same Divine breath that God, being in her, breathes into her in Himself, which, as I understand, was the meaning of Saint Paul when he said: *Quoniam autem estis filii Dei, misit Deus Spiritum Filii sui in corda clamantem: Abba, Pater.* Which in the perfect is according to the manner described. And there is no need to wonder that the soul should be capable of aught so high; for, since God grants her the favour of attaining to being deiform and united in the Most Holy Trinity, how is it a thing incredible that she should perform her work of understanding, knowledge and love in the Trinity, together with It, like It, by a mode of participation, which God effects in her?

4. And how this comes to pass cannot be known, nor is it possible to express it, save by describing how the Son of God obtained for us and granted us to merit this high estate and office, as He said to the Father, in Saint John: *Volo ut quos dedisti mihi, ut ubi sum ego, et illi sint mecum.* Which signifies: Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me may be also with Me, where I am. That is to say, doing the same work as I, by participation. And He says also: 'I pray not only for these that are present, but for them also who through their teaching shall believe in Me, that they may all be one and the same thing; so that as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I am in Thee, even so they may be one and the same thing in Us; and I have

<sup>1</sup> [See p. 168, n. 1, above.]

<sup>2</sup> Lch: 'touch and understanding.'

<sup>3</sup> Md: 'that she may breathe into God a most sublime breath of love, like to that which the Father breathes.'

<sup>4</sup> Md omits 'same.'

<sup>5</sup> Md: 'that they give her.'

<sup>6</sup> Bz: 'which is the same Holy Spirit, although not in a manifest degree.'

<sup>7</sup> Md: 'neither does human understanding attain to it.'

given them the brightness which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one and the same thing, as We are one and the same thing: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfect in one; that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me'; namely, by communicating to them the same love as to the Son, though not naturally, as to the Son, but, as we have said, by unity and transformation of love. Neither is it to be understood here that the Son means to say to the Father<sup>1</sup> that the saints are to be one thing in essence and nature, as are the Father and the Son; but rather that they may be so by union of love, as are the Father and the Son in unity of love. Wherefore the souls possess these same blessings by participation as He possesses by nature; for the which cause they are truly gods by participation, equals of God and His companions. Wherefore Saint Peter said: 'Grace and peace be complete and perfect in you in the knowledge of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord, according as all things are given to us of His Divine virtue for life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us with His own glory and virtue; whereby He has promised and given unto us most great and precious promises, that by these things we may be made companions of the Divine nature'; which is, after the manner that we have said, for the soul to have participation in work with the Trinity, in the union aforementioned. And though this can be perfectly fulfilled only in the next life, nevertheless, in this life, when the estate of perfection is reached, a clear trace and taste of it are attained, after the manner that we are describing, albeit this cannot be expressed.

5. O souls created for these grandeurs and called thereto! What do ye do? Wherein do ye occupy yourselves?<sup>2</sup> O wretched blindness<sup>3</sup> of the sons of Adam, being blind to so great a light and deaf to so clear a voice, since for so long as they seek grandeurs and glory they remain miserable and mean, unworthy of so many blessings! There follows the second thing.

### **In the serene night,**

9. This night, wherein the soul desires to see these things, is contemplation; for contemplation is dark, and for that reason is called by its other name, 'mystical theology,' which signifies secret and hidden wisdom of God, wherein, without noise of words and without accessory and argument,<sup>4</sup> as in the silence and quiet of the night, hidden by darkness from all that is felt, God teaches the soul after a most hidden<sup>5</sup> and secret manner, without her knowing how; this is that which is called 'understanding yet understanding not.' For this is not done by the active understanding, as the philosophers call it, which works in forms and fancies of things; but it is done in the understanding inasmuch as it is possible<sup>6</sup> and passive, when, without receiving

<sup>1</sup> Gr omits: 'to the Father.'

<sup>2</sup> Gr: 'O wretched war.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'a most high.'

<sup>2</sup> Gr omits: 'O souls . . . occupy yourselves?'

<sup>4</sup> Md: 'and without turmoil and argument.'

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 172, n. 1, above.

such forms and fancies, it passively receives substantial knowledge, which is given to it without any active office or work of its own.

10. And for this cause she here calls this contemplation serene night; for even as the night is called serene because it is free from clouds and vapours in the air, which disturb serenity, so this night of contemplation is, to the sight of the understanding, empty of and withdrawn from every cloud of forms and fancies and particular<sup>1</sup> knowledge which may enter by the senses; it is clean likewise of all kinds of vapour from the affections and desires;<sup>2</sup> and thus it is night to the natural understanding and sense, even as the philosopher teaches, saying that, even as the eye of the bat is darkened in the sunlight,<sup>3</sup> even so is our understanding with the greatest natural light.

**With a flame that consumes and gives no pain.**

11. This flame is the love, now perfect, of God in the soul; which love has now consumed and transformed the soul in itself.<sup>4</sup> For, in order to be perfect, it must have these two properties, namely: that it may consume and transform the soul in God and that the enkindling and transformation of this flame in the soul may give no pain; and thus it is sweet love; inasmuch as there is conformity and fulfilment on either side, and therefore there is no pain caused by difference between the greater and the less, as there was before, when the soul was not capable of perfect love. For it is now like burning coal which, with great conformity, is now made identical with<sup>5</sup> the fire, and is transformed therein, without that smoking and flaming<sup>6</sup> that it gave forth aforetime, and without the darkness and accidents proper to it which it had before the fire had entered into it completely. These things the soul has to trouble it until it arrive at a degree of perfect love wherein love fully and completely and gently possesses it, and does so without the pain of the smoke of the natural accidents and passions, but transformed into a gentle flame, which consumes it and changes it into the motions and actions of God, in the which flame the Bride says that He will show her and grant her all the things whereof she has spoken in this stanza, for she possesses and esteems and enjoys them all in perfect and sweet love of God.

## STANZA XXXIX

**Neither did Aminadab appear,**

3. This Aminadab, in Divine Scripture, signifies the devil, who is the adversary of the soul, and who was ever giving her battle and disturbing her with the innumerable munitions of his temptations, that she might not

<sup>1</sup> Bj, Bz, Lch, 8,654, Md omit: 'particular.'

<sup>2</sup> Lch omits: 'from the affections.' Bz omits: 'from the affections and desires.'

<sup>3</sup> See p. 172, n. 3, above.

<sup>4</sup> Bj, Bz, Lch, 8,654, Md omit all that follows down to: 'and thus it is sweet love.'

<sup>5</sup> Md: 'is now very much like.'

<sup>6</sup> Md: 'and crackling.'

enter into this fortress and secret place of recollection in union with the Beloved. The soul placed herein is so greatly favoured and victorious and strong in virtues that the devil dares not appear<sup>1</sup> before her. Wherefore, since she is in the favour of such an embrace, and the devil is so completely put to flight, and because, too, when a soul has gained a perfect victory over the devil, as the soul has done that has reached this estate, he no longer appears before her, she thus very truly says that neither did Aminadab appear.

**And there was a rest from the siege,**

4. By the siege she here understands the passions and desires of the soul, which besiege and give battle to it round about<sup>2</sup> when they are not conquered; from the which she says, too, that there is now a rest, because in this estate the passions are in such wise set at rest, and the desires mortified, that they can neither disturb the soul<sup>3</sup> nor make war upon it.

**And the cavalry came down at the sight<sup>4</sup> of the waters.**

5. By the waters she here understands the spiritual blessings which in this estate are given to the soul. By the cavalry are understood the faculties of the sensual part, both interior and exterior, which, says the Bride, come down in this estate at the sight of these spiritual waters. For the sensual part of the soul is so purified and spiritualized in this estate that the soul with its sensual faculties and natural forces is recollected and has participation and fruition, after its manner, of the spiritual grandeurs which God is communicating to the spirit, even as David indicated when he said: *Cor meum et caro mea exultaverunt in Deum vivum*. Which is to say: My spirit and flesh together have rejoiced and delighted in the living God.

6. And it is to be noted that the Bride says not here that the cavalry came down here to taste of the waters, but that it came down at the sight of them. For this sensual part with its faculties cannot essentially and properly taste of spiritual blessings because they have not a proportionate capacity<sup>5</sup> for this, either in this life or in the next; but through a certain spiritual overflowing they receive them with refreshment<sup>6</sup> and delight, whereby these faculties are attracted into that recollection wherein the soul is drinking of<sup>7</sup> spiritual blessings. This is to come down<sup>8</sup> at the sight of them rather than to the essential taste of them; and thus they taste of the overflowing which is communicated from the soul to them. She says that they came down, and uses no other word, in order to signify that these faculties descend and come down from their operations to the soul's recollection; wherein may the Lord Jesus,<sup>9</sup> the sweetest Spouse, be pleased to set all such as invoke His Name. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Bz, Lch: 'dares not stop.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz omits: 'round about.'

<sup>3</sup> Md: 'may hardly disturb the soul.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz: 'at the siege.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz: 'they have no proportion or capacity.'

<sup>6</sup> Bj, Md, 8,654: 'they receive refreshment.'

<sup>7</sup> Bz: 'is enjoying.'

<sup>8</sup> Lch: 'These come down.'

<sup>9</sup> Lch: 'may the holy Jesus.'

## POEMS

### INTRODUCTION

**L**IKE every true mystic, St. John of the Cross delighted to sing of Divine love; the earliest in date of his extant works is in verse. Never, perhaps, do we appreciate the truth of the saying that mysticism is the poetry of religion as when we read his few greatest poems. We exclaim, as Dante exclaimed of Virgil: 'Onorate l'altissimo poeta.'

Just as human love is the greatest inspiration of secular poetry—and every literature abounds with illustrations of that truth—so the love of the mystic, which carries man to sublimer heights than any other, has been the most potent creator of sacred poetry. In this respect, from whatever angle we may regard his verses, St. John of the Cross excels. In the first place his best work, whether we consider its content or its form, is at least as great as that of any secular poet that Spain has known. Furthermore, it takes a high place beside any other writing of identical inspiration, in prose or in verse, by reason of the purity of the mystical spirit which gives it being. And it is no less true to say that it forms the most brilliant possible climax to that splendid outpouring of religious poetry which began in Spain soon after the discovery of the New World and continued during the entire course of the century following.

The first and finest of the poems of St. John of the Cross is the 'Spiritual Canticle,' of which we now have forty stanzas, though originally there may have been no more than seventeen. Largely inspired by the Song of Songs, it unfolds the story of the quest of Divine love in the form of an allegory enriched with a great wealth of images, showing among other things how intimate was its author's appreciation of Hebrew poetry. Nevertheless he is in the best sense original throughout. He strips all earthly creatures, as it were, of their adornments in order to weave from them a more regal mantle to Divine Love than any imagined by the muses of Greece or Rome. He interprets aspirations and emotions of the human soul which are all but

ineffable, and pours them forth in language never surpassed outside Holy Scripture.

It seems not unlikely that the first seventeen of these stanzas (composed, it will be remembered, in his Toledo prison) were originally written merely to express his own yearnings and for his personal consolation. The first lines in particular are patient of a subjective interpretation which could not possibly be wholly fortuitous. In any case, this poem, like the other two—the ‘Dark Night’ and the ‘Living Flame’—which give the clearest proof of his poetical talents, was written long before its author was urged to expound its spiritual meaning in a prose commentary. All three are wholly independent of their respective commentaries—the work, in the form in which we now have them, of a skilful and inspired artist.

Next in merit to these must stand a poem at once suggestive in its teaching, appealing in sentiment and graceful in form—the well-known lines with the refrain ‘Although ’tis night.’ Of the remaining poems, most are on a lower level than these, though a few might be considered of greater merit than others. The majority were written, with a purely didactic aim, in that Spanish ballad-metre known as the *romance*. It is not to be expected that such works should reach sublime heights, and not infrequently there are imperfections in them which might well have been eliminated by revision.<sup>1</sup> What can be remarked in all of them, however, is a fluency of expression and a forcefulness of exposition which are by no means to be despised. The most notable of these poems are the long verse commentary on the Gospel *In principio erat Verbum* and the sixteen stanzas on the psalm *Super flumina Babylonis*.

We know much less of St. John of the Cross’s literary capabilities than of his attainments in philosophy and theology.<sup>2</sup> At Medina he would undoubtedly have studied Latin and the Humanities; our knowledge of the Jesuit schools of his day leads us to suppose also that he would have received instruction in the principles of Spanish, as well as of Latin, prosody, and would be versed in the metric of the Middle Ages as well as in the new forms which Boscán and Garcilaso had

<sup>1</sup> [No attempt has been made to eliminate these imperfections in this translation. The verses have been kept as near as possible to their originals, and, when it has been found practicable to render the equivalent of some sound-effect, this has been done. In general, however, the originals of all the poems are somewhat simpler in language than these translations on account of the freedom which any translator of verse into verse must needs permit himself.]

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller discussion of this question the student is referred to the second volume of P. Crisógono’s *San Juan de la Cruz, su obra científica y su obra literaria*.

imported from Italy. A well-known annotation to the *Living Flame of Love*, reproduced and commented upon below,<sup>1</sup> bears witness to the Saint's interest in the artistic side of his work, and proves that he was acquainted with the two chief secular Spanish poets of his day. To this interest and this knowledge we owe the Saint's two most inspired measures, with their happy combination of lines of seven and eleven syllables—the five-lined *lira* of the 'Spiritual Canticle' and the 'Dark Night of the Soul' and its adaptation in the six-lined stanza of the 'Living Flame of Love.' Possibly, too, the bucolic poems of Garcilaso may have suggested to the Saint the idea of telling the story of the Passion in the form of that delicate and pathetic pastoral allegory of the shepherd-boy whose 'breast with love is stricken very sore.'<sup>2</sup>

### PRINCIPAL COLLECTIONS OF THE POEMS

*Collection of Toledo and Beas.* The idea of collecting the Saint's poems may well have been suggested to some of his disciples by his own practice. We know that he wrote several in his Toledo prison<sup>3</sup> and read these to the Discalced nuns who befriended him after his escape from it.<sup>4</sup> Further, on his way to El Calvario he left at Beas a small manuscript collection of his own poems; these were described later, in detail, by M. Magdalena del Espíritu Santo,<sup>5</sup> who made various copies of them. They comprise the 'Spiritual Canticle,' 'How well I know the fount . . .' and the verse commentaries on *In principio erat Verbum* and *Super flumina Babylonis*.

*Collection of Sanlúcar de Barrameda.*<sup>6</sup> This collection, found at the end of the Codex of the *Spiritual Canticle* so named, is much larger than the foregoing, and contains autograph notes by St. John of the Cross, correcting various copyist's errors. The general title placed at the head of the collection reads thus: 'Songs of the soul that rejoices at having reached the high estate of perfection, which is union with God, by the

<sup>1</sup> [See Vol. III, p. 16.]

<sup>2</sup> [I have commented briefly on the art that lies beneath this simple poem in my Rede Lecture, *St. John of the Cross*, Cambridge, 1932, p. 27. P. Silverio's conjecture as to Garcilaso's influence upon it is based on a somewhat vague supposition made by Baruzi. Since then, Dámaso Alonso (see p. 417, n. 1, below) has found (pp. 55–61) more definite evidence of influence in an adaptation of Garcilaso by Sebastián de Córdoba, and a source for the whole poem has been discovered (p. 430, n. 1, below), which does not, however, invalidate Sr. Alonso's conclusion.]

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. Vol. I, pp. xix, xxii.]

<sup>4</sup> [Cf. Vol. I, p. xxiii.]

<sup>5</sup> [Cf. Vol. I, p. xxii.]

<sup>6</sup> On this MS. cf. pp. 8–9, above.

road of spiritual negation.' The poems transcribed in this Codex are those numbered 1 to 8 in this edition (the 'Spiritual Canticle' standing first,<sup>1</sup> and the remainder following in the order in which we give them) and the commentaries on *In principio* and *Super flumina*.

*Collection of Jaén.* This (abbreviated 'J' in the notes to the poems below) forms part of the Codex which belongs to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Jaén.<sup>2</sup> The general title is the same as that of the Sanlúcar Codex. The order, too, is almost identical, but two further poems (those numbered 19 and 20 in this edition) are included. There are many errors of transcription in this Codex: in particular, the poem 'How well I know the fount . . .' is badly copied and is also short of several stanzas.

*Collection of Sacro Monte* (Granada). This collection<sup>3</sup> (abbreviated 'SM' in the notes to the poems below) is another addition to a copy of the *Spiritual Canticle*: it is interesting that copyists should have so generally concurred in appending the Saint's poems to this the most poetical of his prose works. The general title runs: 'Songs of the soul that rejoices at having reached Divine union with God by the road of the negation of itself and of all things in purity of faith.' This Codex contains the same poems as that of Sanlúcar, except that it omits No. 7, possibly by an oversight. The order, however, is very different. The two verse commentaries follow the 'Dark Night'; then come the remainder of the poems, as in Sanlúcar, ending with 'How well I know the fount. . . .' Save for a few slips, the copy follows that of Sanlúcar exactly.

## SECONDARY COLLECTIONS

It would be difficult to enumerate, and still more so to classify, all the manuscript copies of poems by St. John of the Cross. The frequency with which, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, devout souls made individual anthologies of prose and verse on sacred subjects accounts, not only for the abundance of such copies, but also for the large number of poems wrongly attributed to the Saint and for the low standard of accuracy reached by the copyists, who cared little either for questions of authorship or correctness in textual detail. We shall now enumerate the principal collections containing other poems

<sup>1</sup> The 'Spiritual Canticle' is followed by its prose commentary, which precedes the other poems, and the verses are not, of course, repeated. It may be noted that the copy of the *Canticle* which was used for the Brussels edition of 1627 (cf. p. 17, above) contains the same poems as are found in this collection.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 10-11, above.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 10, above.

attributed to St. John of the Cross than those in Sanlúcar, J and SM, all of which last may safely be accepted.<sup>1</sup>

*MS. of Carmelite Nuns of Pamplona.* This copy, made by M. Magdalena de la Asunción, includes seven poems<sup>2</sup> other than those already mentioned, together with some paraphrases of compositions known to be by the Saint and several pieces by other authors.

*MS. of Carmelite Friars of Burgos.* To this we shall return in the next volume, when discussing the Saint's *Maxims*. It includes, in the order given, the poems numbered 4, 6, 7, 18, 8 in the text below, together with another beginning 'Mi ofensa es grande, séalo el tormento,' which comes between 7 and 18, and thirteen more, some of very slight merit, by other authors.

*MS. 12,411 (N.L.M.).* This we have already mentioned in discussing the *Dark Night* (Vol. I, p. 323). The poems here included are correctly described as being the work of various authors. Three are by Luis de León.

#### POEMS OF DOUBTFUL AUTHENTICITY

Two of the poems commonly attributed to St. John of the Cross merit a closer examination than the rest, which may safely be considered spurious.

The first, beginning in Spanish 'Del agua de la vida,' contains fifty-two stanzas, of which three of the finest (1, 34, 35) may here be cited in translation:

Athirst for streams of life,  
My yearning soul will not be satisfied.  
She longs to end this strife,  
No more in flesh to abide  
But quench desire in this eternal tide.

. . . . .  
Happy the soul and blest  
That to the presence of her God attains.  
There finds she perfect rest,  
And those blest waters gains  
Wherein she drinks oblivion of her pains.

<sup>1</sup> They are also found in the Brussels edition, with the exception of two poems, which figure in so many authoritative codices that their authenticity cannot be doubted.

<sup>2</sup> The first lines of these, in Spanish, are: *En una cruz divina y regalada; Afuera, corazón, afuera, afuera; Aquella niebla oscura; O dulce noche oscura; Entró el alma en olvido; Entréme dónde no supe* ['I enter'd in—I knew not where'; cf. p. 425, below]; *Del agua de la vida* ['Athirst for streams of life': cf. text, above].

True native land, all hail!  
 Thou perfect rest of souls that in thee dwell,  
 Bliss that can never fail,  
 Where saints bid woe farewell  
 And worship God with joy that none can tell!

This is found in the early Pamplona MS. (p. 413), at the end of the genuine poem beginning 'I enter'd in—I knew not where,' without any indication of a different authorship. MS. 12,411, of N.L.M., formerly the property of the Discalced Carmelite friars of Ecija, also copies it, under the title 'Of Glory.' In MS. 7,741 of N.L.M., which contains several of St. John of the Cross's authentic works, it is copied three times, and it has appeared in a number of anthologies as genuine; finally, P. Gerardo de San Juan de la Cruz included it in his edition of the Saint's collected works<sup>1</sup> under the title 'The soul desires to be with Christ,' though he believed thirty of the fifty-two stanzas to be an interpolation by another hand.<sup>2</sup> The external evidence for the authorship of St. John of the Cross is of the slightest, and the style is more like that of Luis de León. P. Luis Getino, indeed, published it in 1927 as the work of the latter writer,<sup>3</sup> having found it in an old manuscript volume belonging to the Augustinians of Salamanca. We are ourselves inclined to this view; at the very least, it will be admitted that Luis de León is the likelier author.<sup>4</sup>

A second poem frequently attributed to the Saint is that beginning in Spanish: 'Si de mi baja suerte . . .' and known in English by the first and third of its twelve stanzas:

Were love's o'erpowering flame,  
 In this our miserable life below,  
 Stronger than death's dread name,  
 And could it stronger grow,  
 Engulfing e'en the sea's unending flow,

<sup>1</sup> [*Op. cit.*, III, 186-193.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Op. cit.*, III, 146-7.]

<sup>3</sup> *Ciencia Tomista*, 1927, pp. 202-9.

<sup>4</sup> [This is the view of P. Silverio. My own opinion is that there is no more external evidence for the one author than for the other, and, though both the subject and the style are suggestive of Luis de León's 'Heavenly Life' ('Alma región luciente . . .'), the poem as a whole is not particularly in his manner. As I point out in *S.S.M.* (I, 280, 282: 2nd. ed., I, 227-8), parts of the poem are unusually halting for the work of St. John of the Cross and the grounds of rejection are considerable: this seems also to apply to the alternative authorship suggested. I still incline to P. Gerardo's theory of an interpolation, though again the evidence for this is slight.]

E'en then I could not love  
 So that my yearning heart were satisfied,  
 Nor quench the thirst from above  
 That will not be denied,  
 With flames that in my soul do now abide.<sup>1</sup>

This poem, which P. Gerardo prints with the title 'Songs of the soul that grieves because it may not love God so much as it would,' is copied, by a very early hand, in the manuscript of the first redaction of the *Living Flame of Love* which belongs to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Córdoba. Another copy, which belonged to the Discalced nuns of Málaga, forms part of a manuscript containing two other poems formerly attributed to the Saint but now rejected. This is the whole of the evidence for the attribution of this poem to St. John of the Cross, and, when we consider the low level reached by its style and inspiration, we can hardly consider the testimony as of any weight. It is of course possible, and indeed likely, that these and other spurious poems were the work of disciples of the Saint, who, not having the literary gifts of their master, echoed his aspirations all too imperfectly.

#### EDITIONS OF THE POEMS

The oldest known edition of the poems is that of the *Spiritual Canticle*, published at Brussels in 1627, which gives the poems of the Sanlúcar Codex, in the same order and with general title and titles of individual poems practically identical. In the succeeding editions the number and order of the poems varied considerably, but those of Madrid, 1649, and Seville, 1703, follow that of Brussels; the latter added the two poems which we number 19 and 20.

#### POEMS WRITTEN IN COLLABORATION

Apart altogether from the poems which we have discussed, the Saint wrote a number of verses in collaboration with other religious on the occasions of the great festivals of the Church's year. 'He was ever speaking of Our Lord,' deposed a religious of the Andalusian province (Fray Alonso de la Madre de Dios) in 1627, 'and in our times of recreation he enjoined us to make verses (*coplillas*) that we might be the more enkindled in the love of Our Lord, and he would help us and inspire

<sup>1</sup> [S.S.M., I, 282: 2nd. ed., I, 228-9. This poem I describe as being less certainly his than the preceding, and to this view, on stylistic grounds, I firmly hold.]

us herein by contributing a verse himself or sometimes by explaining passages of Holy Scripture.'

Almost all the numerous *coplas* which St. John of the Cross must have composed have been lost.<sup>1</sup> One of them, however, which we publish as No. 21 of our series, comes down to us as his upon the best testimony, that of P. Alonso's biography of the Saint, where he describes the circumstances of its composition in connection with the Christmas festivities in the Carmelite house at Granada when the Saint was Prior there. Short as it is, it forms a link with his life, and as such we must be content with it until, as is to be hoped, more of such compositions are discovered.

<sup>1</sup> The *copla* published by P. Gerardo (*op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 196) is certainly not by St. John of the Cross, but was a verse frequently sung from the earliest times in the Carmelite houses of St. Teresa's foundation.

POEMS<sup>1</sup>

## I

*Songs of the soul that rejoices at having reached the high estate of perfection, which is union with God, by the road of spiritual negation. By the same author.<sup>2</sup>*

1. Upon a darksome night,  
Kindling with love in flame of yearning keen  
—O moment of delight!—  
I went, by all unseen,  
New-hush'd to rest the house where I had been.
2. Safe sped I through that night,  
By the secret stair, disguised and unseen,  
—O moment of delight!—  
Wrapt in that night serene,  
New-hush'd to rest the house where I had been.
3. O happy night and blest!  
Secretly speeding, screen'd from mortal gaze,  
Unseeing, on I prest,  
Lit by no earthly rays,  
Nay, only by heart's inmost fire ablaze.
4. 'Twas that light guided me,  
More surely than the noonday's brightest glare,  
To the place where none would be  
Save one that waited there—  
Well knew I whom or ere I forth did fare.
5. O night that led'st me thus!  
O night more winsome than the rising sun!  
O night that madest us,  
Lover and lov'd, as one,  
Lover transform'd in lov'd, love's journey done!

<sup>1</sup> [Some references have been added in this second edition to two books by Dámaso Alonso: *La Poesía de San Juan de la Cruz*, Madrid, 1942 (abbreviated 'D.A.'), and *Poesía española*, Madrid, 1950 (abbreviated 'D.A.P.').]

<sup>2</sup> Thus the Codex of Sanlúcar de Barrameda (cf. pp. 411-2, above). The same title is found in the Jaén MS. and the Brussels edition. SM has: 'Songs of the soul that rejoices at having reached Divine union with God by the road of the negation of itself and of all things in purity of faith.' As the chief variants and notes belonging to this poem and the two which follow are given elsewhere (Vol. I, p. 10; Vol. II, pp. 25-30, 179-84; Vol. III, pp. 16, 105) they are not repeated here.

6. Upon my flowering breast,  
His only, as no man but he might prove,  
There, slumbering, did he rest,  
'Neath my caressing love,  
Fann'd by the cedars swaying high above.
7. When from the turret's height,  
Scattering his locks, the breezes play'd around,  
With touch serene and light  
He dealt me love's sweet wound,  
And with the joyful pain thereof I swoon'd.
8. Forgetful, rapt, I lay,  
My face reclining on my lov'd one fair.  
All things for me that day  
Ceas'd, as I slumber'd there,  
Amid the lilies drowning all my care.

## II

*Songs between the soul and the Spouse.<sup>1</sup>*

## BRIDE

1. Whither hast vanishèd,  
Belovèd, and hast left me full of woe,  
And like the hart hast sped,  
Wounding, ere thou didst go,  
Thy love, who follow'd, crying, high and low?
2. Ye shepherds, soon to be  
Among those sheepcotes on the hillside high,  
If ye perchance should see  
Him that I love pass by,  
Say to him that I suffer, grieve and die.
3. I'll seek my love straightway  
Over yon hills, down where yon streamlets flow.  
To pluck no flowers I'll stay;  
No fear of beasts I'll know;  
Past mighty men, o'er frontier-grounds I'll go.

<sup>1</sup> [The order in which these stanzas are printed, both here and in my *Poems of St. John of the Cross* (London, 1947), is that of the Sanlúcar Codex, with Stanza XI added. As they originally appeared (*Songs of the Lover and the Beloved*, London, 1931), the order was that of the Jaén Codex.]

## QUESTION TO THE CREATURES

4. You forest, thicket, dene,  
Which my belovèd set in close array;  
You meadow-land so green,  
Spangled with blossoms gay,  
Tell me, oh, tell me, has he pass'd your way?

## ANSWER OF THE CREATURES

5. Rare gifts he scatterèd  
As through these woods and groves he pass'd apace,  
Turning, as on he sped,  
And clothing every place  
With loveliest reflection of his face.

## BRIDE

6. O that my griefs would end!  
Come, grant me thy fruition full and free  
And henceforth do thou send  
No messenger to me,  
For none but thou my comforter can be.
7. The creatures, all around,  
Speak of thy graces as I pass them by.  
Each deals a deeper wound  
And something in their cry  
Leaves me so raptur'd that I fain would die.
8. How do I still draw breath  
Since 'tis no life at all, this life I know?  
These arrow-wounds deal death  
That do torment me so  
And with fair thoughts of thee increase my woe.
9. Why piercest thou this heart  
And heal'dst it not upon the selfsame day?  
Why usedst robbers' art  
Yet leavest thus thy prey  
And tak'st it not eternally away?
10. End thou my torments here,  
Since none but thou can remedy my plight;  
And to these eyes appear,  
For thou art all their light  
And save for thee I value not their sight.

11. Reveal thyself, I cry,  
Yea, though the beauty of thy presence kill,  
For sick with love am I,  
And naught can cure my ill  
Save only if of thee I have my fill.<sup>1</sup>
12. O crystal spring so fair,  
Might now within thy silvery depths appear,  
E'en as I linger there,  
Those features ever dear  
Which on my soul I carry graven clear!
13. Withdraw thy gaze apart,  
For, lo! I soar aloft.

## SPOUSE

Return, my love!  
See where the stricken hart  
Looks from the hill above  
What time he hears thy beating wings, my dove!

## BRIDE

14. My lov'd one is the hills,  
The lonely valleys clad with forest-trees,  
The rushing, sounding rills,  
Strange isles in distant seas,  
Lover-like whisperings, murmurs of the breeze.
15. My love is hush-of-night,  
Is dawn's first breathings in the heav'n above,  
Still music veil'd from sight,  
Calm that can echoes move,  
The feast that brings new strength—the feast of love.
16. Now blooms our nuptial bed,  
Safe-hid from men by lions' fortress-lair,  
With royal purple spread,  
Buidled all free from care,  
Crown'd with a thousand golden scutcheons rare.

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that this stanza is found in the second redaction of the poem only.

17. Youths that adore thy name  
Follow thy footprints, for they sorely pine  
To feel thy touch of flame,  
To taste thy spiced wine,  
To be anointed with thy balm divine.
18. Within his secret store,  
Of my beloved drank I deep indeed.  
Remembering then no more,  
I roam'd this fertile mead,  
My flock forgotten which I used to feed.
19. There gave he me his breast,  
There taught me sweetest science of his own,  
And I myself confest  
His only, his alone,  
Lavish'd my love upon him, keeping none.
20. My soul is well content  
To serve her spouse with all her wealth and might.  
Her days of toil full-spent,  
Her flock now lost to sight,  
Love is her labour, love her sole delight.
21. So, should I ne'er again  
Be seen or heard of on the common-ground,  
Say that I roam'd in vain,  
By bonds of true love bound,  
That I was lost, and that I now am found.
22. Of flowers and emeralds green,  
Gather'd at cool of dawn on summer lea,  
Garlands, my love, we'll glean  
That joy to bloom for thee:  
Bound with one golden hair of mine they'll be.
23. That golden hair one day  
Thou saw'st, as on my neck it lightly stray'd.  
It bound thee then straightway;  
A prisoner thou wert made  
And wounded by my glance that on thee play'd.

24. When thou on me didst gaze  
Thine eyes forthwith imprinted of their grace.  
Then knew I love's amaze,  
And, bolden'd in that place,  
Straightway ador'd as I beheld thy face.
25. Ah, scorn me not, I pray,  
For if, in truth, uncomely once was I,  
Thy beauty came one day,  
And cloth'd my misery:  
Look then on me, thus shrouded, as I cry.
26. Drive us the foxes hence,  
For, see! a-flowering is at last our vine,  
The while with roses dense  
A posy we entwine,  
And on the hill be there of none a sign.
27. Begone, chill northern blast!  
Wind from the south, that wakenest love, be ours!  
Breathe in us, winter past,  
The fragrance of these bowers,  
Where my belovèd pastures 'mid the flowers.

## SPOUSE

28. Her entry she has made  
Into the garden she has long'd to tread.  
Now joys she in its shade,  
Resting as on a bed  
And on her lov'd one's arm she lays her head.
29. Beneath the apple-flower  
To plight my troth to thee, my love, I came.  
My hand in that same hour  
Pledg'd unto thee my name  
In reparation of thy mother's shame.
30. Birds as ye take your wing,  
Lion and hart and skipping fallow-deer,  
River-bank, valley, spring,  
Heats, breezes, mountains sheer,  
Things that chase sleep and fill the nights with fear:

31. By siren's sweetest song  
And pleasant lyre, I conjure you to cease.  
Flee, you disorder'd throng,  
The rampart of our peace:  
The Bride shall find in sleep secure release.

## BRIDE

32. Daughters of Jewry, stay!  
While choicest ambar-perfume doth invade  
Rose-bowers and blossoms gay,  
Rest in the outer glade  
And come not to disturb our holy shade.
33. Hide thee, my lover dear,  
And lift thine eyes until the hills they see.  
Speak not, for none will hear;  
Lo, where they company  
With her that roams strange islands, far and free.

## SPOUSE

34. See, where the milk-white dove  
Bears to the ark the pledge of flood-freed ground,  
And the comrade of her love  
The turtle-dove has found  
Upon the verdant banks that lie around.
35. So she who dwelt alone  
In loneliness again has built her nest,  
Guided alone by one,  
Upon her lonely quest,  
Who, lonely too, by love was sorely prest.

## BRIDE

36. Belovèd, let us sing,  
And in thy beauty see ourselves portray'd,  
Where purest waters spring  
Rippling o'er hill and glade;  
Then enter farther in the forest's shade.

37. Mount we at last on high  
 E'en to the caverns of the rocky mine.  
 Enter we, thou and I,  
 Those secret haunts divine,  
 To drink of the pomegranate's ruddy wine.
38. There unto this thy dove  
 That which her soul has yearn'd for wilt thou show,  
 And there, dear life-of-love,  
 That blessing wilt bestow  
 Which once she has known and ever longs to know.
39. The gently stirring air;  
 The sweetest song of dulcet Philomene;  
 The forest wondrous fair  
 Upon a night serene;  
 The flame consuming-fierce yet painless-keen.
40. None can behold us more  
 Nor e'en Aminadab can now appear.  
 For the long, long siege is o'er  
 And the horsemen, halting here,  
 Dismount and gaze upon the water clear.

## III

*Songs of the soul in the intimate communion of the union of the love of God.  
 By the same author.*

1. O living flame of love  
 That, burning, dost assail  
 My inmost soul with tenderness untold,  
 Since thou dost freely move,  
 Deign to consume the veil  
 Which sunders this sweet converse that we hold.
2. O burn that searest never!  
 O wound of deep delight!  
 O gentle hand! O touch of love supernal  
 That quick'nest life for ever,  
 Putt'st all my woes to flight,  
 And, slaying, changest death to life eternal!

3. And O, ye lamps of fire,  
In whose resplendent light  
The deepest caverns where the senses meet,  
Once steep'd in darkness dire,  
Blaze with new glories bright  
And to the lov'd one give both light and heat!
4. How tender is the love  
Thou wak'nest in my breast  
When thou, alone and secretly, art there!  
Whispering of things above,  
Most glorious and most blest,  
How delicate the love thou mak'st me bear!

## IV

*Verses by the same, written upon an ecstasy of high contemplation.*

- I enter'd in—I knew not where—  
And, there remaining, knew no more,  
Transcending far all human lore.
1. I knew not where I enter'd in.  
'Twas giv'n me there myself to see  
And wondrous things I learn'd within,  
Yet knew I not where I could be.  
I'll say not what was told to me:  
Remaining there, I knew no more,  
Transcending far all human lore.
  2. That was the love, all else above,  
Of perfect peace, devotion deep.  
In the profound retreat of love  
The path direct I learn'd to keep.  
Such secret knowledge did I reap  
That, stammering, I could speak no more,  
Transcending far all human lore.
  3. Herein so deeply was I vers'd,  
Thoroughly absorb'd and borne so high,  
So far my senses were immers'd  
That destitute of sense was I.  
My soul was dower'd from on high  
With power of thought that thought no more,  
Transcending far all human lore.

4. He that in truth attains to this  
Is lost to self upon the earth.  
All that, before, he knew as his  
Appears to him of little worth.  
His knowledge comes anew to birth,  
Yet, resting there, he knows no more.  
Transcending far all human lore.
5. The nearer I approach'd the cloud,  
The less I understood its light,  
That, howso darksome was its shroud,  
Illumin'd all the gloomy night.<sup>1</sup>  
Wherefore a soul that knows that sight  
Can never compass knowledge more,  
For this transcends all human lore.
6. This wond'rous knowledge knowing naught  
Is of a power so sov'reign high  
That wise men's reasoning and thought  
Defeat it not, howe'er they try.  
Ne'er can their intellect come nigh  
This power of thought that thinks no more,  
Transcending far all human lore.
7. Built on so excellent a plan  
This summit of true knowledge is  
That neither wit nor power of man  
Can ever reach such heights of bliss.  
He that can climb as high as this  
Through knowledge that can know no more  
Shall aye transcend all human lore.
8. Would ye unto this summit climb?  
Then know wherein its nature lies.  
'Tis an experience all-sublime,  
God's Self reveal'd before our eyes.  
His clemency the means supplies  
Whereby man understands no more,<sup>2</sup>  
Yet far transcends all human lore.

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xiv, 20.

<sup>2</sup> SM has 'knows' for 'understands.'

## V

*Verses of the soul that craves to see God. By the same author.*<sup>1</sup>

I live, yet no true life I know,  
And, living thus expectantly,  
I die because I do not die.

1. Within myself no life I know  
And without God life cannot be;  
Then, since there's neither life for me,  
What can my life be here below?  
A thousand deaths I undergo  
And for my true life here I sigh,  
Dying because I do not die.
2. This life that has been giv'n to me  
Is but true life's negation—nay,  
'Tis death that comes with each new day,  
Until I live, my God, with Thee.  
Hearken, O Lord, to this my plea.  
No longing for this life have I  
Who die because I do not die.<sup>2</sup>
3. Absent, my Lord and God, from Thee,  
What gain I as I draw my breath?  
What taste I, but the pains of death,  
The sharpest that I e'er did see?  
Yet, living perseveringly,  
For my unhappy lot I sigh,  
Who die because I do not die.
4. The fish that leaves the river's brim  
Finds mingled suffering and gain.  
At first he suffers death-like pain,  
But at the last death comes to him.  
And, as my wretched life burns dim,  
'What death can equal this?' I cry:  
'The more I live, the more I die.'

<sup>1</sup> [On the resemblances between this poem and one on the same theme by St. Teresa, see my *Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus*, London, 1946, Vol. III, p. 277, n. 1, and D.A., p. 113, D.A.P., pp. 245-9.]

<sup>2</sup> SM reverses the position of this and the following stanza.

5. I gaze on Thee, to assuage my pain,  
Beneath the sacramental veils,  
Yet even here my spirit fails  
Because Thy Self I cannot gain.  
With deeper anguish I remain,  
Who see Thee thus imperfectly  
And die because I do not die.<sup>1</sup>
  
6. And if, O Lord, I seek for joy  
In hopes of seeing Thee above,  
Then fears of wandering from Thy love  
With doubled grief my hopes alloy.  
Thus hope my soul would e'er employ  
While fear is ever standing by:  
I die because I do not die.
  
7. O save me from this death-like case,  
My God, and give true life to me.  
Hold me no more, but set me free  
From straitest bondage in this place.  
Look how I yearn to see Thy face,  
And how I grieve so utterly,  
Dying because I do not die.<sup>2</sup>
  
8. My death I'll mourn unceasingly,  
Lamenting life that still is mine,  
What time my sins, as I repine,  
Detain me here when I would flee.  
And oh, my God, when shall it be  
That I may gladly, truly cry:  
'Now live I and no longer die!'

<sup>1</sup> SM and J substitute two lines which may be rendered:  
Who languish thus so utterly,  
Dying because I do not die.

<sup>2</sup> SM and J substitute three lines which may be rendered:  
Look how I die to see Thee where  
Thou art, and thus expectantly  
I die because I do not die.

## VI

*Other verses with a Divine meaning, by the same.<sup>1</sup>*

Upon love's chase, I went my way,  
Not void of hope, began to fly,  
And soar'd aloft, so high, so high,  
That in the end I reach'd my prey.<sup>2</sup>

1. To gain at last right royally  
The battle when the flight was o'er,  
So far aloft I had to soar  
That my own self I could not see.  
So fiercely strove I on that day  
That strength grew faint and weak indeed,  
But love suffic'd for all my need  
And in the end I reach'd my prey.
2. The dreadful force of dazzling light  
Blinded me more, the more I rose;  
The greatest conquest o'er my foes  
Was made in blackness of the night.  
But love it was that won the day;  
Blindly, obscurely, did I fly;  
I soar'd aloft, so high, so high,  
That in the end I reach'd my prey.
3. The farther upward did I go  
In this great chase of love so high,  
The baser, humbler soul was I,  
The more exhausted did I grow.  
'No hope of conquest!' did I say,  
But, as I sank so low, so low,  
So high, so high, did upward go,<sup>3</sup>  
That in the end I reach'd my prey.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SM: 'Other verses that treat of the flight of the soul to God.'

<sup>2</sup> [Though the idea beneath this poem occurs in Gil Vicente, Juan del Encina and other Spanish poets (*vide* particularly F. López Estrada in *Revista de Filología Española*, 1944, xxviii, 473-7), the theme-stanza was believed to be original until Dámaso Alonso found its source in an almost identical quatrain, glossed in an entirely secular way (N.L.M., MS. 3,168, fol. 15 v.). Sr. Alonso, to whom the poem appeals as 'particularly moving,' has discussed it at length, both before and after his discovery, in D.A., pp. 119-22, 234-6, *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 1947, Vol. XXVI, pp. 63-79, and D.A.P., pp. 253-6.]

<sup>3</sup> The original is identical with the seventh line of the last stanza.

<sup>4</sup> J and SM reverse the order of the third and fourth stanzas.

4. In ways that none can e'er explain  
 I made a thousand flights in one,  
 For he that hopes to reach the sun  
 His heart's desire shall surely gain.  
 Naught had I hoped for but this day  
 And hope impell'd me up to fly.  
 I soar'd aloft so high, so high,  
 That in the end I reach'd my prey.

## VII

*Other stanzas with a Divine meaning (by the same author) concerning Christ and the soul.<sup>1</sup>*

1. A shepherd-boy his grief is brooding o'er  
 Alone, uncomforted, disconsolate.  
 His thought is fix'd<sup>2</sup> upon his heart's true mate;  
 His breast with love is stricken very sore.
2. He weeps not for some love-wound giv'n of yore,  
 For no such thing could pain and grieve him so,  
 E'en though it overcharg'd his heart with woe:  
 He weeps because she thinks of him no more.
3. And so, because she thinks of him no more  
 —That shepherd-maid of his, so fair to see—  
 He lets his alien foes treat cruelly  
 The breast that love has stricken very sore.
4. 'Woe,' cries the shepherd-boy, 'Woe be in store  
 For him that's come betwixt my love and me,<sup>3</sup>  
 So that she wishes not to know or see  
 This breast that love has stricken very sore.'

<sup>1</sup> [J. M. Blecuca (*Revista de Filología Española*, Madrid, 1949, XXXIII, 378–80) has discovered the source of these stanzas, which are modelled closely on a secular poem of the sixteenth century. He collates the stanzas with their source, and the two poems are also transcribed in D.A.P., pp. 256–8. It is instructive to read the comments in D.A., pp. 55–61, written before this discovery.]

<sup>2</sup> J: 'His thought is firm.'

<sup>3</sup> [This line *De aquel que de mi amor ha hecho ausencia* (which differs from the corresponding line in Sr. Blecuca's source: ¿*Qué haré cuando venga el mal de ausencia . . . ?*) has been variously translated. Lewis has: 'For I am abandoned and left!' P. Bruno reads: 'Celle dont l'absence torture mon amour.' Hoornaert: 'Ah! malheureux amour absent de mon amour!' Campbell (*Bibliography*, No. 83): "'Alas! for him," the shepherd

5. Then climbs he slowly, when much time is o'er,  
 Into a tree, with fair arms wide outspread.  
 And, clinging to that tree, forthwith is dead,  
 For lo! his breast was stricken very sore.<sup>1</sup>

## VIII

*Song of the soul that rejoices to know God by faith.*<sup>2</sup>

How well I know the fount that freely flows  
 Although 'tis night!

1. The eternal fount its source has never show'd,  
 But well I know wherein is its abode,<sup>3</sup>  
 Although 'tis night.<sup>4</sup>
2. Its origin I know not—it has none:  
 All other origins are here begun,  
 Although 'tis night.

cries, "Who tries from me my dearest love to part . . ." There seem to be two possible interpretations: (1) *Desdichado* ('Woe,' *lit.*, 'unhappy') may be used of humanity, the human soul, the shepherdess of the poem. This interpretation assumes the author's temporary abandonment of his pastoral allegory, since the word translated 'him' in the text above is the masculine *aquel*. It may be doubted if a writer with as much literary sense as St. John of the Cross would depart so unnecessarily and inartistically from his allegory and then so quickly return to it. Theologically, however, and in other respects the interpretation is satisfactory, since *hacer ausencia* can be used as a synonym for *ausentarse*; if we adopt it, the translation would read, 'Unhappy he who has absented himself from my love!' (2) *Desdichado* may be introducing the third party traditional in the pastoral romance, who, according to the natural allegorical interpretation, would be either Satan or a personification of sin. This accounts satisfactorily for *aquel*, but raises a fresh difficulty, for the third line reads, literally, not 'so that she,' but 'and'—i.e., unless we supply the word 'she,' and alter the construction of the original, it refers to *aquel*. In Spanish, however, the subject-pronoun is not normally expressed, and it is only the previous mention of *aquel* that causes any ambiguity. I incline, though not strongly, to the second view, as will be seen from the rendering in the text.]

<sup>1</sup> [This last stanza, which has no correspondence in the secular source, seems to have been influenced by Garcilaso—Córdoba: cf. D.A., pp. 58–9, Blecua, *op. cit.*, p. 380.]

<sup>2</sup> [On this poem, see D.A., pp. 61–8, 123–34, 229–30, and D.A.P., pp. 289–91. SM has numerous variants: some of these are given in the footnotes, but most are too slight to be reproduced in translation.]

<sup>3</sup> SM has: 'But well I know its seat and its abode.'

<sup>4</sup> [The following stanza:

Yea, in a life so sad and dark as this,  
 By faith I know the waterspring of bliss,  
 Although 'tis night.

is omitted by P. Silverio, being found only in SM and several other and less authoritative versions, with some variants, of the slightest importance, in the second line.]

3. I know that naught beside can be so fair,  
That heav'ns and earth drink deep refreshment there,  
Although 'tis night.
4. Well know I that its depths can no man plumb  
Nor, fording it, across it hope to come,  
Although 'tis night.
5. Never was fount so clear, undimm'd and bright:  
From it alone, I know, proceeds all light,  
Although 'tis night.
6. Rich are its streams and full—this know I well;  
They water nations, heav'ns and depths of hell,  
Although 'tis night.
7. Yea, more I know: the stream that hence proceeds,  
Omnipotent, suffices for all needs,<sup>1</sup>  
Although 'tis night.
8. From fount and stream another stream forth flows,  
And this, I know, in nothing yields to those,<sup>2</sup>  
Although 'tis night.<sup>3</sup>
9. The eternal fount is hidden in living bread,  
That we with life eternal may be fed,  
Although 'tis night.
10. Call'd to this living fount, we creatures still  
Darkly may feed hereon and take our fill,  
Although 'tis night.
11. This living fount which is so dear to me  
Is in the bread of life, which now I see,  
Although 'tis night.

<sup>1</sup> SM reads: Yea, more: the stream that from this fount proceeds  
Is potent and suffices for all needs.

<sup>2</sup> SM reads: From fount and stream another torrent flows.  
In essence this in nothing yields to those.

<sup>3</sup> [P. Silverio omits the following stanza, which comes from SM:  
So this quick fount three waters does comprise,  
And each, I know, in other has its rise,  
Although 'tis night.]

## IX

## ROMANCE I

*Upon the Gospel 'In principio erat Verbum,' relating to the Most Holy Trinity.<sup>1</sup>*

Far away in the beginning  
Dwelt the Word in God Most High  
And in God His bliss eternal  
Had He everlastingly.

That same Word was God Almighty,  
And Beginning was His name,  
For He dwelt in the beginning,  
Out of no beginning came.

He Himself was that beginning  
Wherefore He Himself had none.  
He that sprang from that beginning  
Was the Word, called also Son.

Everpast has God conceived Him,  
And conceives Him evermore,  
Gives Him ever of His substance  
Ever shares it as of yore.

Thus His glory in the Father  
Is the glory of the Son:  
All His glory had the Father  
In His best Belovèd One.

As Belovèd dwells in Lover  
Each in other did reside,  
And that same love that unites Them  
Did in both of Them abide;

Each was equal to the Other  
And in worth ranked equally.  
Thus there were in that tri-union  
One Belovèd, Persons three.

<sup>1</sup> [All these *romances*—i.e., IX–XVII—have their even lines rhyming in *-ia*: to reproduce this feat is unfortunately impossible in English. This termination, however, being that of the imperfect and the conditional indicative, the poet has often to use these tenses when the sense demands others, a consideration which has been taken into account in this version.]

One the love that did unite Them,  
 One the Lover in all Three:  
 Lover that is the Belovèd,  
 In Whom each dwelt equally.

For the Being of three Persons  
 They possess'd the Same Each One,  
 Each One loving both the Others  
 Since They had it as Their own.

This same Being is each Person:  
 Naught but this conjoin'd them well  
 In a tie<sup>1</sup> so strange and wondrous  
 That its nature none can tell.

Infinite and everlasting  
 Was the love that bound Them so.  
 One alone this love that bound Them  
 Which as Essence we may know,  
 And the more this love had oneness,  
 More the love that thence did grow.

## X

## ROMANCE II

*Of the Communication of the Threc Persons.*

In that boundless love, proceeding  
 From the Father and the Son,  
 Words to Him the Father utter'd  
 Comprehensible by none.

Words of deepest satisfaction,  
 Words of infinite delight,  
 That the Son alone rejoic'd in,  
 For to do so was His right.

One such word alone is told us  
 Which He utter'd lovingly:  
 'Son, in naught can I take pleasure  
 If Thou be not here with Me.

<sup>1</sup> J, SM: 'In a way.' Sanlúcar: 'grasp' (*puño*), emended marginally, apparently by St. John of the Cross himself, to 'tie' (*nudo*).

When in aught I find contentment,  
That I seek alone in Thee.  
Who resembles Thee most nearly,  
He most truly pleases Me.

Who resembles Thee in nothing  
Finds no echo in My soul.  
Thou alone dost give Me pleasure,  
Satisfaction deep and whole.

Very light art Thou of My light,  
Truest wisdom art to Me,  
Very Figure of My Substance,  
Right well pleas'd am I in Thee.

Gift of gifts on him that loves Thee,  
Mine own Self will I bestow.  
All the love that binds Me to Thee  
In him will I cause to grow.  
Since He loves My own Belovèd  
I this grace to him will show.'

## XI

## ROMANCE III

*Of the Creation.*

'Son of Mine, I fain would give Thee  
For Thyself a loving Bride,  
One that should be wholly worthy  
With Us ever to abide.

Bread with Us and at Our table  
Would she eat in such a wise  
That the worth of My Belovèd  
She would learn to recognize,  
Joying in the grace and beauty  
That My Son has in Mine eyes.'

'Thanks to Thee for this, My Father,'  
Answer made to Him the Son.  
'Then shall I bestow My brightness  
On My Father's chosen one,

So that through it she may realize  
 All My Father is to Me,  
 Learning that My heavenly Being  
 Comes, My Father, all from Thee.

She in love of Thee shall kindle,  
 On My bosom shall recline,  
 Know eternally of gladness,  
 Magnify Thy love Divine.'

## XII

## ROMANCE IV

*Of the same.*

'Be it done, then,' said the Father,  
 'For Thy love's exceeding worth,'  
 And, the sentence having spoken,  
 He created this our earth.

For the Bride He built a palace  
 Which His wisdom vast did show,  
 Portioned it in two divisions,  
 One on high, the other low.

In the lower part, its mansions  
 Many differences display'd,  
 But the upper rooms were beauteous,  
 All with wondrous gems array'd.

In the upper rooms the Father  
 Set the angelic hierarchy  
 That the Bride might know her Bridegroom  
 Greater than them all to be.

In the lower of the mansions  
 Human nature had to dwell,  
 Since its mortal composition  
 Far below the angels' fell.

Though their dwellings and their essence  
 These two orders did divide,  
 Both of them compris'd the body  
 Of the one and self-same Bride.

One they were, she said, for ever,  
Since they had the Bridegroom's love;  
And, if they have glad fruition  
Who for ever dwell above,

Those below in hope are living,  
Born of faith infus'd by grace,  
That in time He will exalt them  
To that higher, better place.

He will raise them from the lowness  
Which belong'd to them before,  
So that none who shall behold them  
Will reproach them any more.

For in every way and manner  
Like Himself they then shall be;  
He will walk with them in friendship,  
Make them of His company.

Man shall be as God hereafter;  
God shall be as human kind;  
He shall eat and drink with mortals;  
And commune with mortal mind.

He shall tarry in their presence,  
Be with them continually,  
Till this present dispensation  
Ended and consum'd shall be.

Then 'mid melody eternal  
Bride and Bridegroom shall be wed,  
Two already close-united,  
She the body, He the Head.

All the Bride's component members  
Shall partake in that great rite  
And those members are the righteous  
Which in her He will unite.

Tenderly, with fond embraces,  
He will take to Himself the Bride,  
Drawing near unto the Father  
With His dear one at His side.

Then the Bride shall have fruition  
 Like the Father and the Son  
 And the Holy Ghost Eternal  
 Who proceeds from either One.

Each of these lives in the Other;  
 Even so shall be the Bride.  
 She shall be absorb'd within Him  
 Live His life, in Him abide.

## XIII

## ROMANCE V

*Of the same.*<sup>1</sup>

With the hope of such communion  
 Coming to them from on high,  
 All the trials of the righteous  
 Lighter grew as days went by.

But the hope grew long and distant  
 And more vehement desire  
 For fruition of their Bridegroom  
 Ever burn'd them with its fire.

Wherefore with continual sighing  
 They with tears and sighs did pray.  
 Agonizingly and often  
 Begg'd their Bridegroom, night and day,

That He speedily would give them  
 His companionship sublime.  
 'Ah!' said some, 'that such fruition  
 Might be reach'd in this my time!'

Others cried: 'O Lord and Saviour  
 Send Thy Chosen, send Him now!'  
 Others: 'Break, ye heavens, and quickly  
 Come, Lord, come among us Thou!

<sup>1</sup> Some editions have the title: 'Of the desires of the holy fathers.'

With mine eyes let me behold Thee  
Then my cries shall change to song.  
Clouds above, drop rain upon us,  
Rain the earth has needed long!

Let the earth be cleft asunder,  
Let it bring forth thorns no more,  
Let it burst at last with blossom  
And with flowers be cover'd o'er.'

'Blest the unconceivèd mortal,'  
Other souls were wont to say,  
'Worthy to behold the Saviour,  
With his eyes and in his day,

With his mortal hands to touch Him,  
In His company to stay  
And enjoy the holy myst'ries  
To be founded 'neath His sway!'

## XIV

## ROMANCE VI

*Of the same.*

In such prayers and supplications  
Many years had passed away,  
But in latter times the fervour  
Greatly grew from day to day.

Deeply mov'd, the agèd Simeon,  
Love-enkindled inwardly,  
Pray'd to God that He would spare him  
His appointed day to see.

By the will of the Almighty  
This most fervent prayer was heard,  
And the blessèd Holy Spirit  
Gave the saintly man His word

That, until he saw His glory,  
He should not be call'd to die;  
That his hands should touch the Saviour,  
God Himself come down from high;  
In his arms he should enfold Him  
And embrace Him lovingly.

## XV

## ROMANCE VII

*Goes on to treat of the Incarnation.*

Now at last the time has dawnèd  
For the ransom of the Bride,  
Who for long has serv'd in bondage  
In her chains constrain'd to abide.<sup>1</sup>

Long ago had Moses given  
Sternest law 'neath which she lay.  
Now affection deep and tender  
Mov'd our Father, God, to say:

'This Thy Bride, O Son, Thou seest;  
In Thine image she is made,  
Like to Thee in all that may be,  
But one law must be obey'd.

Twixt the lover and belovèd  
Rules the law of perfect love;  
There must be completest likeness,  
Every other thing above.

But Thy Bride is fleshly, mortal,  
And no taint of flesh hast Thou,  
Wherefore joy complete and perfect  
Cannot be Thy lov'd one's now.

Should'st Thou take her flesh upon Thee,  
Should'st Thou greet her mortal sight,  
She would recognize her likeness,  
Great would then be her delight.'

Then the Son replied: 'O Father,  
See, My will is always Thine,  
And the nature of My glory  
Is that Thy will must be Mine

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to serve.'] SM: 'to lie.

Wherefore, Father, that Thou sayest  
Is to me supremely good,  
Chiefly for that thus Thy goodness  
Will be better understood.

Thus Thy justice, thus Thy wisdom,  
Thus Thy all-compelling power  
Will be fully manifested.  
Lo, I go this very hour  
There to show Thy grace and beauty  
Of Thy sovereignty the dower.

To the world I gladly hasten,  
World where languishes My Bride.  
All her weariness and trials  
In My bosom I will hide.

Then to give her life eternal  
I Myself will surely die,  
Save her from the lake infernal,  
Carry her to Thee on high.'

## XVI

## ROMANCE VIII

*Of the same.*

Then He summon'd an archangel,  
Blessèd Gabriel by name.  
To a lowly girl called Mary  
The Divine archangel came.

For with her co-operation<sup>1</sup>  
This great mystery could be.  
With her flesh the Word was clothèd  
By the Blessed Trinity.

All three Persons work'd that wonder,  
Though in One alone 'twas done.  
In the womb of Blessèd Mary  
Word became Incarnate Son.

<sup>1</sup> SM reads: 'For if Mary were contented.'

He that erst had had but Father  
Had a Mother likewise then,  
And He was conceiv'd in Mary,  
As have been no other men.

Hers His flesh and hers His dwelling  
Ere His human life began,  
Wherefore He is call'd together  
Son of God and Son of Man.

## XVII

## ROMANCE IX

*Of the Birth of Christ.*

When the interval of waiting  
For His birth its course had run,  
Straight from out His bridal chamber  
Came the Bridegroom, God the Son.

Once on earth, with arms extended  
He embrac'd His heavenly Bride,  
And the gracious Mother laid Him  
In the manger, at her side.

All around that helpless baby  
Animals were standing by;  
Men sang songs of glad rejoicing;  
Angels join'd their songs on high,

Celebrating the betrothal  
'Twixt the Bridegroom and the Bride,  
While the Almighty, in the manger,  
As an infant, wept and cried.

So the Bride those tears as jewels  
Brought to the betrothal-rite,  
And the Maid was lost in wonder  
As she saw so rare a sight.

Man was full of joy and gladness;  
God was shedding tears as man.  
Ne'er was such a strange mutation  
Since the ages first began.

FINIS.

## XVIII

*Another poem by the same author which paraphrases 'Super flumina Babylonis.'*<sup>1</sup>

Far above the many rivers  
That in Babylon abound  
Sat I down, and, sorely weeping,  
Water'd there the alien ground.

As I thought on thee, O Sion,  
Whom I lov'd as ne'er before,  
Sweetest memories came upon me  
And I wept and wept the more.

Then I donn'd my working garments,  
Shedding others bright and gay,  
And upon the verdant willows  
Hang'd the harp I used to play.

There it waits for the fulfilment  
Of the things I hop'd from thee;  
There with love my soul was wounded;  
There my heart was wrung from me.

'Slay me, love!' I cried in anguish,  
'Since my wounds bring pain so sore.'  
Then I enter'd love's fierce furnace,  
Knowing I should burn the more,

Sympathizing with the fledgling  
When in fire it seeks its death:  
In myself I too am dying,  
But in thee I still draw breath.

In myself for thee I perish'd,  
Then for thee I breath'd once more.  
Thinking on thee left me lifeless,  
Till those thoughts did life restore.

[First I died for very dying.  
'Twas my life that slaughter'd me:  
For so long as it continued,  
Thy dear face I could not see.]

<sup>1</sup> SM has this title: 'Romance of the soul enamoured of Sion the celestial, according to the psalm "Super flumina Babylonis."'

Greatly joy'd the heartless aliens  
 In whose sight I captive lay,  
 [And, I saw, though this they knew not,  
 By their joy were led astray.]<sup>1</sup>

'Sing unto us,' they demanded.  
 'Sing some song thou holdest dear,  
 Sing a hymn that's sung in Sion:  
 We are curious to hear.'

'Tell me, how, in lonely exile,  
 Where for Sion's joys I pine,  
 Can I celebrate the gladness  
 That in Sion's land was mine?  
 I were traitor to my country  
 If I could rejoice in thine!

Let my tongue unto my palate  
 Ever cleave and ever cling  
 If I should forget my country  
 And her songs in exile sing.'

Sion, by the verdant branches<sup>2</sup>  
 Of this Babylonian tree,  
 Let my own right hand forget me,  
 Dearest thing I lov'd in thee,

If thou passest from my memory  
 With thy joys and thy delight,  
 If I celebrate a feast-day  
 When thou art not in my sight.

O, thou Babylonian daughter,  
 Hapless and in misery,  
 One there is in Whom I trusted,  
 Blessèd may He ever be!  
 For the punishment thou gavest  
 He in turn shall give to thee.

He shall bring me, with His children  
 (Since these bitter tears I shed),  
 To the Rock, to Christ our Saviour,  
 Rock to Whom from thee I fled.<sup>3</sup>

*Debetur soli gloria vera Deo.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SM alone inserts these two stanzas, [the first two lines of the second of which only are included by P. Silverio, as occurring also in other MSS.

<sup>2</sup> SM: 'Sion, by the sweetest branches.'

<sup>3</sup> SM omits this stanza.

<sup>4</sup> The MSS. of Sanlúcar and Jaén both end with this line.

## XIX

*Ballad<sup>1</sup> with a Divine meaning.<sup>2</sup>*

Securely stay'd, yet without stay,  
Dark and unlighted all the day,  
Wholly do I consume away.

1. From creatures now my soul is free,  
Detach'd from all created things;  
Now she at last has taken wings  
And lives her life delectably.  
To God, and God alone, she clings.  
Therefore the thing I most esteem  
—And this thing I will ever say—  
Is that my soul herself doth deem  
Securely stay'd, yet without stay.
2. What though I walk 'mid gloom of night  
While still about this life I go?  
No grave affliction is my woe,  
For, though I be devoid of light,  
An all-celestial life I know.  
Love of such life is all in all:  
Darker may grow the pilgrim's way,  
Yet gladly he endures its thrall,  
Dark and unlighted all the day.
3. Since first I knew this love divine  
Such wonders has it wrought in me  
That naught but happiness I see  
Alike if good or ill be mine,  
For love transforms unfailingly.  
The flame of heavenly love so sweet  
I feel within me night and day.  
Swiftly it whelms me with its heat:  
Wholly do I consume away.

<sup>1</sup> [The original has *glosa*, which is a poem built upon lines placed at its head, as here and in No. 20.]

<sup>2</sup> This and the next poem are found in J and SM, as well as in several other MSS., though not in all. In both poems we follow J.

## XX

*Ballad with a Divine meaning. By the same author.<sup>1</sup>*

For all the beauty man can gain  
 Never my life away I'll fling,  
 But rather for some other thing  
 Which happy chance may well attain.

1. Taste of delights that pass away  
 Nothing can give of lasting joy:  
 Insipid to the palate they,  
 Causing the appetite to cloy;  
 Wherefore, for sweetness, taste most vain,  
 Never my life away I'll fling,  
 But rather for some other thing  
 Which happy chance may surely gain.
2. The generous heart will never rest  
 With aught remaining to be won;  
 Though hard the duty to be done  
 At that alone it works with zest.  
 It knows not weariness or pain;  
 Its faith will rise upon the wing;  
 For it desires some other thing  
 Which happy chance may surely gain.<sup>2</sup>
3. He that has felt the pangs of love,  
 And God's own touch has learn'd to know,  
 No longer cares for things below;  
 His joys are set on God above,  
 Like as a man in fever'd pain  
 His daily food away will fling  
 And clamour for some other thing  
 Which happy chance may surely gain.
4. Marvel ye not that this is so,  
 That taste conforms to no set laws,  
 For of this ill the root and cause  
 With other things has naught to do,

<sup>1</sup> [On this poem, and the lines which it treats *a lo divino*, see D.A., pp. 116-19, D.A.P., pp. 249-53.]

<sup>2</sup> [The Saint's change of rhyme-scheme in this stanza is followed exactly.]

- Wherefore I find myself most fain  
All creature-joys away to fling  
And long to have some other thing  
Which happy chance may surely gain.
5. For, once the will has felt the touch  
Of the Divinity on high,  
Naught else its need can satisfy;  
It only begs another such.  
But since, this beauty to attain,  
No means but faith the soul can bring,  
It finds it in some unknown thing  
Which happy chance may surely gain.
6. Then, since thou art with love afire,  
Tell me if thou canst ever grieve  
Because no joy thou dost receive  
From all the creatures men desire.  
Figures and forms thou dost disdain,  
To naught that is on earth dost cling,  
But yonder see'st some other thing  
Which happy chance may surely gain.
7. Think not that that of greatest worth  
—To wit, a man's most deep desire—  
Gladness or joy can ever fire  
With that which pleases us on earth.  
For more than beauty, which is vain,  
Than that which is, was or shall be,  
It yearns for something steadfastly  
Which happy chance may surely gain.
8. The man that dreams of wealth in store  
Considers what is yet unwon,  
And that which is already done  
He puts away as 'twere no more.  
So I, desiring to attain  
The highest that this life can bring,  
Press ever toward some other thing  
Which happy chance may surely gain.
9. For that which mortal sense may see  
Or apprehend while here below,  
For that which intellect may know,  
However lofty it may be,

For grace and beauty, which are vain,  
 Never my life away I'll fling,  
 But rather for some other thing  
 Which happy chance may surely gain.

## XXI

*With the Word Divine.*

With the Word Divine  
 The Virgin, pregnant,  
 Comes upon her way,  
 If you give her lodging.<sup>1</sup>

## XXII

*Compendium of perfection.*

Forgetfulness of things created,  
 Remembrance of the Creator,  
 Attention to that which is within,  
 And continual love for the Beloved.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this fragment [which in the original rhymes *abab*] see p. 416, above.

<sup>2</sup> This verse [which rhymes *abba* in the original] was attributed to St. John of the Cross by P. Esteban de San José in the edition which he made of the Cautions [*Cautelas*] in 1667

## VOLUME THREE

LIVING FLAME OF LOVE  
CAUTIONS AND COUNSELS  
SPIRITUAL SENTENCES AND MAXIMS  
LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS  
INDICES

NIHIL OBSTAT: GEORGIUS SMITH, S.T.D., PH.D.  
CENSOR DEPUTATUS  
IMPRIMATUR: E. MORROGH BERNARD  
VICARIUS GENERALIS .  
WESTMONASTERII: DIE XXIV SEPTEMBRIS MCMJII

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## LIVING FLAME OF LOVE

### INTRODUCTION

ONE of the Carmelite followers of St. John of the Cross whose depositions at the Segovian process of 1627 are still extant remarks that the teaching of the Saint so far transcends that of other mystical writers that where they leave off, there it may be said to begin. The reader of the *Spiritual Canticle*, which occupies the preceding volume of the present edition, may well subscribe to this statement. Beyond such sublimity of description, one would suppose, there can only lie the ineffable. Yet it must be agreed that in the *Living Flame of Love*—the shortest of his four great treatises—St. John of the Cross takes us still farther into the mysteries of which he is so rare an exponent and presents us with a work, less tenderly appealing, no doubt, than the *Spiritual Canticle*, but written with greater eloquence and ardour, impetuosity and lyrical fervour, telling of a love more completely refined and of a soul nearer than ever to God.

The poem expounded in the treatise consists of but four stanzas and the preface describes the author's attitude to his own exposition of them.

I have felt some unwillingness . . . to expound these four stanzas . . . for they relate to things so interior and spiritual that words commonly fail to describe them, since spirit transcends sense and it is with difficulty that anything can be said of the substance thereof. For it is hard to speak of that which passes in the depths of the spirit if one have not deep spirituality; wherefore, having little thereof myself, I have delayed writing until now. But now that the Lord appears to have opened knowledge somewhat to me and given me some fervour . . . I have taken courage, knowing for certain that out of my own resources I can say naught that is of any value, especially in things of such sublimity and substance.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. p. 13, below.]

These words indicate that a special preparation has been undergone by one whose writing was habitually of exceptional sublimity, and who, furthermore, was unusually reticent about anything which might redound to his own praise. From the outset of the treatise, therefore, we should be prepared to find that the Saint had reached a point as near as possible to perfection. Although 'in the stanzas which we expounded above' (i.e. the *Spiritual Canticle*), he tells us, in fact, 'we spoke of the most perfect degree of perfection to which a man may attain in this life, which is transformation in God, nevertheless these stanzas treat of a love which is even more completed and perfected within this same state of transformation.' 'There is no reason for marvelling,' he remarks, meeting an objection which might easily be raised by a reader, 'that God should grant such high and rare favours to those souls on whom He bestows consolations. . . . For God said that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit would come to him that loved Him and make Their abode in him, and this would come to pass by His making him live and dwell in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the life of God.'<sup>1</sup>

In the first stanza, the soul is already transformed in God, and is 'adorned with such a marvellous wealth of gifts and virtues,' and so near to eternal bliss, that it is separated from such bliss only by a frail and delicate web which it entreats God to sunder so that its glorification may be completed.<sup>2</sup> Fit theme for the pen of one who, like St. John of the Cross, could rejoice in what he happily terms 'exercises of love.' Within the soul thus transformed there is held, as it were, a 'feast of the Holy Spirit'; and, now that purgation is past, the soul's intimacy is so 'secure, substantial and delectable' that the devil cannot enter and impede its joy.<sup>3</sup>

Having expressed its desire to be united with God in glory, the soul passes, in the second stanza, to a consideration of the perfections of the Most Holy Trinity, dwelling upon its ineffable happiness as it is cauterized, wounded and touched by that gentle hand. So exquisite is the 'savour of eternal life' which this experience produces that the soul desires to escape, by means of death, that it may know that life in its fullness. 'I die,' it exclaims in the words of St. John of the Cross's own poem, 'because I do not die.'<sup>4</sup>

'May God be pleased to grant me His favour here!' exclaims the Saint before entering upon the commentary to his third stanza, for he

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 14, below.

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. p. 21, below.]

<sup>2</sup> [Cf. p. 17, below.]

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol. II, p. 428.

felt its 'profound meaning' to be as difficult to convey as to understand. The soul now 'gives deepest thanks to its Spouse for the great favours which it receives from union with Him, for by means of this union He has given it great and abundant knowledge of Himself wherewith the faculties and senses . . . have been enlightened and enkindled with love, and can now be illumined, as indeed they are, and through the heat of love can give light and love to Him Who enkindled and enamoured them and infused into them such Divine gifts.' This is so for many reasons—among others because 'the true lover is content only when all that he is, and all that he is worth and can be worth, and all that he has and can have, are employed in the Beloved; and the more of this there is, the greater is the pleasure that he receives in giving it.'<sup>1</sup> Sublime and profound indeed is the application which follows of the similitude of the lamp, which, with its double office of giving light and burning, represents the wonderful effects of the love of God within purified souls—that is, where the terrible purgations of sense and spirit have formed the 'deep caverns of sense.'

When St. John of the Cross reaches this point, his ardour abates for a time, and he follows, rather sadly, a line of thought suggested by an abuse of too frequent occurrence in the world of the spirit—the unskilled direction of souls that have reached the highest stages of Christian perfection. So greatly was he oppressed by this impediment to sanctity that he allows himself to discuss it in a long digression which fills no less than one-fifth of his entire treatise<sup>2</sup>. Concurrently with his exposure of the harm caused by unskilful direction—a theme which is also treated by St. Teresa—he makes a rapid synthesis, on the lines laid down in the *Ascent* and the *Dark Night*, of the progress of the soul from the moment of its initiation into the spiritual life to its transformation in God through love.

The commentary on the fourth stanza finds the author once more immersed in the theme of Divine love. With ineffable tenderness the soul describes to the Beloved His awakening within it and His secret indwelling. After developing at some length the various manners of this awakening, the Saint passes to the delectable aspiration of God within the soul, but here at length words fail him and he breaks the strings of his lyre, leaving the last lines of the poem practically without commentary.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 53, below.

<sup>2</sup> For the reader's convenience, the *editio princeps* divided this commentary into seventeen paragraphs, which, however, we do not observe, as in this edition the whole treatise is divided into numbered paragraphs.

The period at which the *Living Flame of Love* was written can be fixed within narrow limits—i.e. between May 1585 and April 1587, a period during which the Saint was Vicar-Provincial of the Order in Andalusia.<sup>1</sup> This we know from P. Juan Evangelista, who tells us that the author composed the treatise in a fortnight, without abandoning any of his obligations or duties as Vicar-Provincial. There seems no reason to doubt the exactness of this statement. Difficulty has been found in the fact that the *Canticle* contains a reference to the *Living Flame*,<sup>2</sup> while the *Living Flame* mentions the *Canticle*.<sup>3</sup> But, if we admit the authenticity of both redactions of the *Canticle*, this is easily explained, for it is in the second redaction of that commentary that we find the former of the two quotations. The first redaction, as we have said, was written in 1584, some months before the *Living Flame* could possibly have been begun, while the second redaction must have been completed by August 1586, a date which not only falls well within the limits for the composition of the *Living Flame*, but gives us the likelier of the two possible years in which it might have been composed, since during the second year of his vicariate the Saint travelled much more widely than during the first, which saw him in Granada almost continuously.

Both the stanzas known as the *Living Flame* and the commentary upon them were composed, as we learn from the Prologue, at the repeated entreaty of the Saint's spiritual daughter, Doña Ana de Peñalosa, a Segovian widow living in Granada with her brother and a generous benefactress of the Discalced Reform in her native city.<sup>4</sup> Not unnaturally, considering the scanty leisure which he had had for writing it, St. John of the Cross revised it some time after it was written and thus gave us the second redaction which is included in this edition with the first. There is ample external evidence for the authenticity of this second redaction, which was made during the last months of his life at La Peñuela.<sup>5</sup> Here he lived for about six weeks before illness overtook him, and for some two months altogether. Both P. Jerónimo de San José<sup>6</sup> and P. José de Jesús María<sup>7</sup> refer to the Saint's being occupied there with the revision of 'the last of his mystical treatises,' and Francisco de San Hilarión, who lived with him at this time,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. xx.

<sup>2</sup> Stanza XXXI, Second Redaction [Vol. II, p. 342].

<sup>3</sup> Prologue [p. 14, below].

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Letters XXIV, XXVIII [pp. 272, 275, below], which are addressed to Doña Ana del Mercado y Peñalosa.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vol. I, p. xx.

<sup>6</sup> *Historia*, etc., Bk. VII, chap. iii, p. 709.

<sup>7</sup> *Vida*, Bk. III, chap. xiv.

describes how he would go out daily to pray in the garden before sunrise, then come in to say Mass and finally return to his cell for prayer or 'the writing of some small books (*libricos*) which he left upon certain stanzas.'<sup>1</sup> Although the name of this commentary is not given, the use of the diminutive termination and the fact that the Saint's other commentaries are earlier in date makes it probable that the *Living Flame* is referred to. Nor does the evidence end here. The existence of some very early copies of this treatise, which we shall describe later, enables us to judge, from internal as well as from external testimony, the genuineness of the second redaction, the probability of which, in our view, is so great as to amount practically to certainty.

The revision is chiefly concerned with the commentary upon the first three stanzas, which varies considerably in the two versions; the commentaries on the fourth stanza are almost identical until near the end. In the original Spanish, the second version is almost exactly one-seventh longer than the first. The doctrinal content of the book is unaffected; the additions are chiefly designed to amplify or clarify; if omissions there are very few. Occasionally a new paragraph (such as the fifteenth of the commentary on the first stanza) seems to have been inserted to meet some particular difficulty caused by the sublimity of the Saint's instruction. No new stanzas are introduced, nor is the order of the stanzas changed as in the *Spiritual Cantic*.

The principal critic to combat the genuineness of the second redaction of the *Living Flame* is M. Baruzi,<sup>2</sup> who holds that 'certains affadissements d'ordre littéraire sont assez troublants,' and then proceeds to discuss what he considers graver objections. He cites, for example, the phrase '(endeavouring to persuade love to set it free) from the knot of this life,' which in the second redaction becomes 'from mortal flesh.'<sup>3</sup> In the first phrase he finds 'energy,' which disappears in the second. We do not ourselves see any great improvement in the alteration, but we certainly fail to find any great *affadissement* in it. In any case, M. Baruzi has been unfortunate in his example, for the 'energetic' words 'from the knot of this life' are an addition of the *editio princeps* to the reading of the manuscripts, and only two manuscripts have 'from mortal flesh.' Furthermore, it may be added that the Saint did, to our certain knowledge, make numerous corrections as insignificant as this in his own manuscripts. So much is proved by

<sup>1</sup> N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Saint Jean de la Croix*, Paris, 1924, pp. 35-42; 1931 (2nd edition), pp. 33-40.

<sup>3</sup> Stanza I, § 2 [pp. 18, 107, below].

the Sanlúcar codex of the *Spiritual Canticle*, where we find frequent marginal emendations made in what is beyond all doubt St. John of the Cross's own hand.

A more serious objection made by M. Baruzi to the genuineness of the second redaction is what he alleges to be its weakening of the thought and expression of the first. Before the objection could be considered valid it would be necessary to show that the changes made are not in conformity either with his thought or with the form which he gives to his writings, and this we believe to be impossible. To our own mind the majority of the changes strengthen the original rather than weaken it, as, for example, with the two passages beginning 'For in this preparatory state of purgation . . .'<sup>1</sup> which the reader can compare for himself. In the original text the Saint had explained only why the flame was 'not sweet, but grievous'; in the revised text he enlarges upon other of its qualities. There are many similar examples of this type of treatment.

M. Baruzi considers, further, that in the second redaction he finds 'le souci de diminuer en quelque sorte l'ardeur mystique et de rappeler le plus souvent possible que les états humains, même les plus hauts, ne sont qu'une très imparfaite image de la vie de gloire.' He cites two examples of this, both taken from the commentary on the line: 'That tenderly woundest my soul in its deepest centre.'

'The centre of the soul,' says the first redaction, 'is God; and, when the soul has attained to Him according to the whole capacity of its being. . . .'<sup>2</sup> The second redaction omits the word 'whole,' which, according to M. Baruzi, disfigures the passage. Once again, his example is not happily chosen, for both Codex 17,950 (S), which we normally follow, and Codex 8,795 (Bz) have the word 'whole,' which will be found in our edition.<sup>3</sup> The other MSS. omit the word, and P. Gerardo, whose edition is used by M. Baruzi, follows them. In any case, no part of the sense is strictly lost in Spanish by the omission of the word: 'the capacity of its being' means 'the whole capacity of its being'; the adjective simply gives emphasis.

No better founded is the objection that the second redaction continually insists that even the highest human states are only an imperfect image of the life of bliss. We reproduce the passages chosen by M. Baruzi from Stanza I, §§ 12-13, in illustration of this thesis.

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. pp. 25, 115, below.]

<sup>2</sup> [P. 22, below.]

<sup>3</sup> [P. 111, below.]

## FIRST REDACTION

The centre of the soul is God; and, when the soul has attained to Him according to the whole capacity of its being, and according to the force of its operation, it will have reached the last and the deep centre of the soul, which will be when with all its powers it loves and understands and enjoys God; and so long as it attains not as far as this, although it be in God, Who is its centre by grace and by His own communication, still, if it has the power of movement to go farther and strength to do more, and is not satisfied, then, although it is in the centre, it is not in the deepest centre, since it is capable of going still farther.<sup>1</sup>

## SECOND REDACTION

The centre of the soul is God; and, when the soul has attained to Him according to the whole capacity of its being, and according to the force of its operation and inclination, it will have reached its last and deepest centre in God, which will be when with all its powers it understands and loves and enjoys God; and, so long as it has not attained as far as this, *as is the case in this mortal life, wherein the soul cannot attain to God with all its powers*, then, although it be in this its centre, which is God, by grace and by His own communication which He has with it, still, inasmuch as it has the power of movement and strength to go farther, and is not satisfied, then, although it may be in the centre, it is nevertheless not in the deepest centre, since it is capable of going to the deepest centre of God.<sup>2</sup>

M. Baruzi's second example, taken from the same commentary (§ 13), runs thus:

## FIRST REDACTION

And thus, when the soul says that the flame wounds it in its deepest centre, it means that it wounds it in the farthest point attained by its own substance and virtue and power. This it says to indicate the copiousness and abundance of its glory and delight, which is the greater and the more tender when the soul is the more fervently and substantially transformed and centred in God. This is something much greater than comes to pass in the ordinary union of love. . . . For this soul, which is now in such sweetness and glory, and the soul that enjoys only the ordinary union of love, are in a certain way comparable respectively to the fire of God, which, says Isaiah, is in Sion, and which signifies the Church Militant, and to the furnace of God which was in Jerusalem and which signifies the vision of peace.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> § 12, p. 22, below.

<sup>2</sup> P. 111, below. The italics are M. Baruzi's.

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 23-24, below

## SECOND REDACTION

And thus, when the soul says here that the flame of love wounds it in its deepest centre, it means that the Holy Spirit wounds and assails it in the farthest point attained by its own substance, virtue and power. *This it says, not because it desires to indicate here that this flame wounds it as substantially and completely as it will do<sup>1</sup> in the beatific vision of God in the life to come. . . .* And thus these two kinds (of union)—that is, of union alone, and of love and union with enkindling of love—are in a certain way comparable respectively to the fire of God, which, says Isaias, is in Sion, and to the furnace of God which is in Jerusalem. The one signifies the Church Militant . . . and the other signifies the vision of peace, *which is the (Church) Triumphant.*<sup>2</sup>

We can see no such fundamental divergence as M. Baruzi finds in these passages. The author of the additions and emendations does no more than adapt the commentary to the aim set down in the exposition to the stanza, in order to make it clearer and more definite, possibly with the less instructed of his readers in view who would otherwise find it obscure. In the Exposition the Saint describes, so clearly that he who runs may read, how the soul that sees itself 'adorned with . . . a marvellous wealth of gifts and virtues' longs to achieve union with God in glory, the only obstacle to which is its earthly life; to which end it entreats 'this flame, which is the Holy Spirit,' to 'break the web of this sweet encounter.'<sup>3</sup> This is the theme of the whole of the *Living Flame*: it is only natural that, in revising his own work, the Saint should try to bring it out more clearly.

Finally, M. Baruzi remarks upon a few modifications of detail, which, taken together with the fundamental changes already noted, he considers of cumulative significance. The figure of fire and flame, he says, in itself so natural and simple, is of frequent occurrence in the first redaction, but to the author of the second seemed insufficiently clear. So we find in the first (Stanza I, § 15) 'for it must be known that this flame,'<sup>4</sup> which the second amplifies to read, 'for it must be known that this flame, which is God.'<sup>5</sup> In the next paragraph, again, the second redaction reminds the reader that 'this flame' of the first redaction 'is the Holy Spirit.'<sup>6</sup> Once more, in the second of the longer passages cited above, the Holy Spirit is quite unnecessarily introduced into the later redaction.

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'that this is as substantial and complete as'.]

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 112-113, below. The italics are M. Baruzi's.

<sup>3</sup> P. 17, below.

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'this flame of God.' P. 114, below.]

<sup>5</sup> P. 25, below.

<sup>6</sup> [Pp. 25, 114, below.]

But if, in the first redaction, and at the very beginning of his commentary, St. John of the Cross had made this formal comparison between the flame and the Holy Spirit, why should it be considered unnatural that, in revising his work, he should repeat it for the better understanding of his doctrine? Such modifications appear to us to be an argument in favour of the authenticity of the second redaction rather than against it.

But why, it may be asked (as M. Baruzi has asked), was the *Living Flame* published according to the first redaction rather than according to the second? It is undeniable, as the most superficial comparison of the second redaction with the *editio princeps* will suffice to show, that there is no kind of relation between these. But the answer casts no reflection on the authenticity of the second redaction—it is simply that it was unknown until P. Andrés de la Encarnación discovered it in collating the various copies of the commentary with a view to preparing his own projected edition. P. Andrés himself held it to be genuine and would certainly have published it had his edition ever been completed.<sup>1</sup>

It will be relevant here to quote a few lines copied by P. Andrés on a blank sheet at the end of MS. P of the second redaction:

This manuscript has revealed the fact that our father St. John of the Cross wrote a second time, or revised, the book of the *Flame of Love*, for there are found in it many things which are not to be seen either in the work as printed or in many old manuscripts which agree with it, and also many additions and things set down at greater length and more clearly, which it is evident cannot be the work of any other hand than that of the glorious father. . . .<sup>2</sup>

From this note it is clear that nothing was previously known about the second redaction of the *Living Flame*, and also that the examination of it made by P. Andrés, who, as we have seen, was no mean critic, led him to think very highly of it. The editors who followed immediately upon P. Salablanca were content to reproduce his edition, for the most part quite uncritically. If the second redaction of the *Spiritual Canticle* escaped attention for so long, despite its additional stanza, its annotations and additional passages of commentary, it is easy to understand how that of the *Living Flame* should have been overlooked, its additions and modifications being, relatively speaking, so few. There are fewer copies extant of the second redaction of the *Living Flame* than of

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. Vol I, pp. lix, ff.]

<sup>2</sup> [The remainder of the note, which is not relevant to the discussion, will be found in P. Silverio, Vol. IV, pp. xxii-xxiii.]

the *Spiritual Cantic*, nor are these copies as satisfactory. We now describe the manuscripts of each redaction.

#### MANUSCRIPTS OF THE FIRST REDACTION

*Toledo.* The Codex belonging to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Toledo which contains the *Dark Night* [cf. Vol. I, p. 321] also contains a copy of the *Living Flame*. It is written in several hands and probably dates from the end of the sixteenth century.

*Sacro Monte.* At the end of the *Cantic* as it appears in this manuscript [Vol. II, p. 10] is a copy of the *Living Flame* with the title 'Exposition of the stanzas which treat of the very intimate and perfected union and transformation of the soul in God, (made) at the request of Sra. Doña Ana de Peñalosa by him who composed them.' With few and unimportant exceptions, this copy, which was made at the same time as that of the *Cantic* in the same Codex, agrees with the foregoing, even in the infrequent phrases which it omits.

*Córdoba.* This fine copy, which belongs to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Córdoba, is entitled 'Exposition of the stanzas which treat of the very intimate and perfected union of the soul with God, composed and expounded by the holy father Fray John of the Cross, religious of the Order of Our Lady of Carmel, the first man to assume the Discalced habit.' The copy dates from the Saint's own time, and is in a large, clear hand; there are a good many copyist's slips but few variants of importance.

*MS. 18,160.* An early copy in a legible hand, containing also the *Ascent* and the *Dark Night* [cf. Vol. I, pp. 7, 323]. The Prologue is missing from this copy, as are also the note referring to Boscán [p. 16, below] and III, § 53, together with various shorter passages. The copy also has numerous variants.

*MS. 6,624.* This MS., dated 1755, we have described in Vol. I, pp. 6, 321. The copy of the *Living Flame* agrees almost exactly with that of the Toledo MS.

*Alba de Tormes.* Described in Vol. I, pp. 5-6, 321. The copy of the *Living Flame* follows that of the *Spiritual Cantic* and is prefaced only by the words 'Via illuminativa.' It is in a much more unsatisfactory condition than that of any of the other three treatises which with it comprise the Codex. Long passages of the commentary on each stanza are omitted, and only the first and the last paragraphs are copied of the seventeen into which the editions divide the commentary on the line 'The deep caverns of sense.' The impression which the copy gives is

that the amanuensis was anxious to complete his work at the first possible moment.

*Pamplona.* Described in Vol. I, pp. 7, 323. On p. 230 of this Codex, under the title 'Of how the soul must behave which God sets in the dark night of the spirit,' we read: 'The same holy father, Fray John of the Cross, explaining certain stanzas which he composed on the intimate union of the soul with God which begin "O, living flame of love,"' says as follows in his explanation of the third stanza on that line 'The deep caverns of sense.' The copy then begins at III, § 27 of our edition, and continues, with slight variants and numerous long omissions, as far as III, § 58. It thus has no critical value.

#### MANUSCRIPTS OF THE SECOND REDACTION

*MS. 17,950 (N.L.M.).* The copy of the *Living Flame* begins: 'I.H.S. Exposition of the Stanzas which treat of the very intimate and perfected union and transformation of the soul in God, by the father Fray John of the Cross, Discalced Carmelite, at the request of Doña Ana de Peñalosa, composed in prayer in the same year 1584.' The copy is in a woman's hand and has no corrections. P. Andrés tells us that it belonged to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Seville; no doubt the copyist (certainly an Andalusian) was one of the nuns. A peculiarity of this MS. is that the Prologue is signed by St. John of the Cross. The transcription, which dates from the time of the Saint, is well done; there are practically no omissions; and the copyist's errors are easily rectified. On the whole, the copy is a very satisfactory one and may well serve as basis for the edition of this second redaction.

*Cordoba.* A fine copy in a man's hand and of the same period as MS. 17,950. It originally belonged to a Discalced Carmelite *desierto* in the Sierra of Córdoba and in the eighteenth century came into the possession of the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Córdoba. Besides having a title similar to that of MS. 17,950, but rather shorter, it has a sub-title of contemporary date: 'Stanzas made by the soul in the last union in God.' The copy agrees closely with that of Seville and has scarcely any serious errors.

*MS. 8,795.* Described in Vol. I, p. 321. The *Living Flame* is reproduced substantially as in the two preceding MSS., under the title 'Stanzas made by the soul in the last union with God, made and commented by the father Fray John of the Cross.' The first eighteen folios are in a small and bad hand and the remainder in a much better hand. In the commentary on the third stanza are added some late corrections.

This is one of the MSS. recommended by P. Andrés for his edition of the *Living Flame*.

*Palencia*. A well-written copy in an excellent state of preservation, but unsatisfactory from the critical standpoint, as P. Andrés noted. It is contemporary with, or perhaps rather later than, the last years of the Saint's life.

*Burgos*. A generally correct MS. dating from the late eighteenth century. The version of the *Living Flame* follows the Palencia MS., from which it seems to be copied. The title is identical with that of the Sacro Monte MS. (first redaction) save that there are added the words 'namely the father Fray John of the Cross, Discalced Carmelite.'

A note may be added on the principal editions of the *Living Flame*. The *editio princeps* introduces many variants, and occasionally omits passages, and even whole paragraphs, though normally short ones. It also regularly omits the Latin texts of the Scriptural quotations. But many of the changes it makes aim at clarifying the Saint's exposition and the editions which follow it depart from it very little.

P. Gerardo's edition (1912) gave precedence to the second redaction over the first, which it printed as an appendix. Our own proceeding is to give both redactions their full weight; as a basis for the first we have used the Toledo MS., and, for the second, that of Seville.

The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes:

#### *First Redaction*

A=MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Friars of Alba de Tormes.

B=MS. 6,624 (N.L.M.).

C=MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Córdoba.

G=MS. 18,160 (N.L.M.).

Gr=MS. Sacro Monte, Granada.

P=MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Pamplona.

T=MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Toledo.

#### *Second Redaction*

Bg=MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Friars of Burgos.

Bz=MS. 8,795 (N.L.M.).

C=MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Córdoba.

P=MS. of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Palencia.

S=MS. 17,950 (N.L.M.).

The *editio princeps* (Alcalá, 1618) is referred to throughout as e.p.

## LIVING FLAME OF LOVE

*Exposition of the stanzas which treat of the most intimate and perfected union and transformation of the soul in God, written at the request of Doña Ana de Peñalosa by the author of the stanzas themselves.*<sup>1</sup>

### PROLOGUE<sup>2</sup>

I HAVE felt some unwillingness, most noble and devout lady,<sup>3</sup> to expound these four stanzas which you have<sup>4</sup> requested me to explain, for they relate to things so interior and spiritual that words commonly fail to describe them, since spirit transcends sense and it is with difficulty that anything can be said of the substance thereof. For it is hard to speak of that which passes in the depths of the spirit<sup>5</sup> if one have not deep spirituality; wherefore, having little thereof myself, I have delayed writing until now. But now that the Lord appears to have opened knowledge somewhat to me and given me some fervour<sup>6</sup> (which must arise from your devout desire, for perhaps, as these words have been written for you, His Majesty desires them to be expounded for you)<sup>7</sup> I have taken courage, knowing for certain that out of my own resources I can say naught that is of any value, especially in things of such sublimity and substance. Wherefore my part herein will be limited to the defects and errors that this book may contain, for which reason I submit it all to the better judgment and understanding

<sup>1</sup> The MSS. vary greatly here. We follow Gr. B and T have neither title nor subtitle. A has only the words: 'Unitive Way.' The same is true of the MSS. of the second redaction (cf. p. 103, below). E.p. reads: 'Living Flame of Love and Exposition of the stanzas which treat of the most intimate union and transformation of the soul with God, by the venerable Father Fray John of the Cross, first discalced friar of the Reform of our Lady of Carmel and coadjutor of the blessed Mother St. Teresa of Jesus, foundress of the same Reform.'

<sup>2</sup> G omits the prologue.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'most noble and devout lady.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. substitutes 'they' for 'you.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'since spirit transcends sense and it is hard to speak of the depths of the spirit.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'some fervour of spirit.' [Cf. the 'certain degree of fervour' of *Spiritual Canticle*, Prologue (Vol. II, p. 23, of this edition).]

<sup>7</sup> E.p. omits the parenthesis.

of our Mother<sup>1</sup> the Roman Catholic Church, under whose guidance no man goes astray. And, with this preamble, relying upon Divine Scripture, and making clear that all which is said herein is as far removed from all that there is to say as is a picture from a living person, I shall make bold to say that which I know.<sup>2</sup>

2. And there is no reason for marvelling that God should grant such high and rare favours<sup>3</sup> to those souls on whom He bestows consolations. For if we consider that He is God, and that He bestows them as God, with infinite love and goodness, it will not seem to us unreasonable. For God said that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit would come to him that loved Him and make Their abode in him,<sup>4</sup> and this would come to pass by His making him live<sup>5</sup> and dwell in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the life of God, as the soul explains in these stanzas.

3. For although in the stanzas which we expounded above<sup>6</sup> we spoke of the most perfect degree of perfection to which a man may attain in this life, which is transformation in God, nevertheless these stanzas treat of a love which is even more completed<sup>7</sup> and perfected within this same state of transformation. For, although it is true that both these stanzas and those speak of a state of transformation beyond which, as such, a soul cannot pass, yet none the less, with time and practice, as I say, the soul may become more completely perfected and grounded in love. Even so, when a log of wood has been set upon the fire, it is transformed into fire and united with it; yet, as the fire grows hotter and the wood remains upon it for a longer time, it glows much more and becomes more completely enkindled, until it gives out sparks of fire and flame.

4. And it is of<sup>8</sup> this degree of enkindled love that the soul must be understood as speaking when it is at last transformed and perfected interiorly in the fire of love; not only is it united with this fire<sup>9</sup> but it has now become one living flame within it. Such the soul feels itself to be, and as such it speaks in these stanzas, with an intimate and delicate

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'our holy Mother.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. modifies thus: 'relying upon Divine Scripture, and observing that all which is said herein is much less than that which happens in that intimate union with God, I shall make bold to say that which I know.'

<sup>3</sup> Gr.: 'such high and great and rare favours.'

<sup>4</sup> St. John xiv, 23.

<sup>5</sup> A.: 'making him come.'

<sup>6</sup> [i.e., in the 'Spiritual Canticle.']

<sup>7</sup> C.: 'treat of that which is greater and more completed.'

<sup>8</sup> [Lit., 'in.']

<sup>9</sup> [Lit., 'in this fire.'] E.p.: 'with this Divine fire.'

sweetness of love, burning in the flame thereof, and extolling in these stanzas certain effects thereof which are wrought in itself.<sup>1</sup> These I shall expound in the same order as with the other stanzas, setting them down first all together, then setting down each stanza and expounding it briefly, and finally setting down each line and expounding it by itself alone.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. : 'burning in the flame thereof and considering here certain marvellous effects thereof which are wrought in itself.'

END OF THE PROLOGUE

# STANZAS OF THE SOUL

## IN THE INTIMATE COMMUNICATION OF UNION OF THE LOVE OF GOD

1. Oh, living flame of love That tenderly woundest my soul in  
its deepest centre,  
Since thou art no longer oppressive, perfect me now if it be  
thy will, Break the web of this sweet encounter.
2. Oh, sweet burn! Oh, delectable wound! Oh, soft hand!  
Oh, delicate touch  
That savours of eternal life and pays every debt! In slaying,  
thou hast changed death into life.
3. Oh, lamps of fire, In whose splendours<sup>1</sup> the deep caverns of  
sense which were dark and blind  
With strange brightness Give heat and light together to  
their Beloved!
4. How gently and lovingly thou awakenest in my bosom,  
Where thou dwellest secretly and alone!  
And in thy sweet breathing, full of blessing and glory, How  
delicately thou inspirest my love!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A, B, T: 'Of whose splendours.'

<sup>2</sup> The MSS., with the exception of G, here add the following note, which is omitted from e.p. [and from all later editions until that of 1912]: 'The arrangement of these *liras* resembles that of those which in Boscán are adapted in a divine [i.e., spiritual] sense [*vueltas a lo divino*], and which say:

La soledad siguiendo,  
Llorando mi fortuna,  
Me voy por los caminos, que se ofrecen, etc.

In these there are six feet [i.e. lines], of which the fourth rhymes with the first, the fifth with the second, and the sixth with the third.'

[The reference is to an adaptation *a lo divino* made by Sebastián de Córdoba (*Las Obras de Boscán y Garcilaso trasladadas en materias cristianas y religiosas*, Granada, 1575) of the first lines of Garcilaso's 'Canción segunda.' On this, see J. Baruzi, *Saint Jean de la Croix*, etc., Paris, 1924, pp. 108-12, Dámaso Alonso, *La Poesía de San Juan de la Cruz*, Madrid, 1942, pp. 47-90, and Emeterio G. S. de Jesús María, O.C.D., *Las Raíces de la poesía sanjuanista y Dámaso Alonso*, Burgos, 1950, pp. 80-6. In his *Poesía española*, Madrid, 1950, Sr. Alonso returns to the subject (pp. 287-9), and also (pp. 229 ff.) makes some interesting remarks on these adaptations *a lo divino* in general.]

## STANZA THE FIRST

Oh, living flame of love That tenderly woundest my soul in its  
deepest centre,  
Since thou art no longer oppressive, perfect me now if it be thy  
will, Break the web of this sweet encounter.

### EXPOSITION

THE soul feels itself to be at last wholly enkindled<sup>1</sup> in Divine union, its palate to be wholly bathed in glory and love, and from the very inmost part of its substance to be flowing veritable rivers of glory, abounding in delights, for it perceives<sup>2</sup> that from its belly are flowing the rivers of living water which the Son of God<sup>3</sup> said would flow from such souls.<sup>4</sup> It seems to this soul that, since it is transformed in God with such vehemence and is in so lofty a way possessed of Him, and is adorned with such a marvellous wealth of gifts and virtues, it is very near to bliss, from which it is divided only by a slender web.<sup>5</sup> And, seeing that that delicate flame of love that burns within it is, as it were, glorifying it with a glory both gentle and powerful<sup>6</sup> whensoever it assails it, to such a degree that, whensoever it is so absorbed and assailed, it believes that it is about to enter upon eternal life and that this web of mortal life will be broken, and that there remains but a very short space of time, yet during this space it cannot be perfectly glorified in its essence, the soul addresses<sup>7</sup> this flame, which is the Holy Spirit, with great yearning, begging Him now to break this its mortal life in that sweet encounter, so that of a truth He may communicate to it perfectly that which it believes Him to be about to give to it and to work in it whensoever He meets it<sup>8</sup>—namely, complete and perfect glory. And thus the soul says:

**Oh, living flame of love**

<sup>1</sup> A: 'transformed.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'in Divine union and transformed through love in God, for it perceives.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'which Christ Our Lord.'

<sup>4</sup> St. John vii, 38.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'slender and delicate web.' A: 'thin web.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'with gentle foretastes of glory.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'will be broken, the soul addresses.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'and to work in it whensoever He meets it.'

2. In order to extol the fervour and delight wherewith it speaks in these four stanzas, the soul begins each of them with the word 'Oh' or 'How,' which words signify affectionate exultation. Each time that they are used they show that something is passing within the soul beyond that which can be expressed by the tongue. And the word 'Oh' serves also to express a deep yearning and earnest supplication with the aim of persuasion; for both these reasons the soul uses that word in this stanza, intimating and extolling its great desire, and endeavouring to persuade love to set it free.<sup>1</sup>

3. This flame of love is the Spirit of its Spouse—that is, the Holy Spirit. And this flame the soul feels within it, not only as a fire that has consumed and transformed it in sweet love, but also as a fire which burns within it and sends out flame, as I have said, and that flame bathes the soul in glory and refreshes it with the temper of Divine life.<sup>2</sup> And this is the operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul that is transformed in love, that the acts that He performs within it cause it to send out flames, which are the enkindling of love,<sup>3</sup> wherein the will of the soul is united, and it loves most deeply,<sup>4</sup> being made one with that flame in love.<sup>5</sup> And thus these acts of love of the soul are most precious, and even one of them is of greater merit and worth than all that the soul may have done in its life apart from this transformation, however much this may be.<sup>6</sup> Like to the difference that exists between a habit and an act is that which exists between transformation in love and the flame of love; it is the same difference as that between the log of wood that is enkindled and the flame which it sends forth, for the flame is the effect of the fire that burns there.

4. Wherefore the soul that is in a state of transformation of love may be said to be, in its ordinary habit, like to the log of wood that is continually assailed by the fire; and the acts of this soul are the flame that arises from the fire of love: the more intense is the fire of union,<sup>7</sup> the more vehemently does its flame issue forth. In the which flame the acts of the will are united and rise upward, being carried away and absorbed in the flame of the Holy Spirit, even as the angel rose upward

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'from the knot of this life.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'of eternal life.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'enkindlings.'] C omits: 'which are the enkindling of love.'

<sup>4</sup> C: 'most sweetly.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'being made one love.'] E.p.: 'being made one thing with that flame through love.'

<sup>6</sup> [The Spanish adds: 'etc.'] E.p. abbreviates: 'is of greater merit than many more that the soul may have done.'

<sup>7</sup> C: 'the fire of the love of union.'

to God in the flame of the sacrifice of Manue.<sup>1</sup> In this state, therefore, the soul can perform no acts, but it is the Holy Spirit that moves it to perform them; wherefore all its acts are Divine, since it is impelled and moved to them by God.<sup>2</sup> Hence it seems to the soul that whensoever this flame breaks forth, causing it to love with the Divine temper and sweetness, it is granting it eternal life, since it raises it to the operation of God in God.<sup>3</sup>

5. This is the language<sup>4</sup> used and employed by God when He speaks to souls that are purified and clean: these words are wholly enkindled, even as David said: 'Thy word is vehemently enkindled.'<sup>5</sup> And the Prophet asked: 'Are not my words as a fire?'<sup>6</sup> These words, as God Himself says through Saint John, are spirit and life,<sup>7</sup> and are felt to be such by souls<sup>8</sup> that have ears to hear them, who, as I say, are souls that are pure and enkindled with love. But those that have not a healthy palate, and desire other things, cannot relish the spirit and life that these words contain; for which reason, the loftier were the words spoken by the Son of God, the more they displeased certain persons because of those persons' impurity,<sup>9</sup> as when the Lord preached that sweet and loving doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, and many of His hearers turned back.<sup>10</sup>

6. Because such persons are not attracted by this language of God, which He speaks inwardly, they must not think that others will not be attracted by it. On the occasion here mentioned it greatly attracted Saint Peter, so that he said to Christ: 'Lord, whither shall we go, for Thou hast the words of eternal life?''<sup>11</sup> And the Samaritan woman forgot her water and her pitcher, because of the sweetness of the words of God. And thus, when this soul is so near to God that it is transformed in the flame of love, wherein Father, Son and Holy Spirit communicate Themselves to it, how is it a thing incredible that it should be said to enjoy a foretaste of eternal life,<sup>12</sup> though this cannot be perfectly so, since that is not permitted by the conditions of this life?

<sup>1</sup> [Judges xlii, 20.]

<sup>2</sup> G.: 'since they are impelled and moved by God.' E.p.: 'In this present state, therefore, the soul cannot perform these acts save if the Holy Spirit move it very specially thereto; wherefore all its acts are Divine, inasmuch as it is moved in this special way by God.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'to a Divine operation in God.'

<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'the language and the words.']

<sup>5</sup> [Psalm cxviii, 140: *Ignitum eloquium tuum vehementer.*]

<sup>6</sup> Jeremias xxiii, 29.

<sup>7</sup> [St. John vi, 64.]

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'and their virtue and efficacy are felt by souls.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'the more insipid did certain persons find them because of the impurity of those who heard them.'

<sup>10</sup> St. John vi, 67.

<sup>11</sup> St. John vi, 69.

<sup>12</sup> G.: 'commune with it, it can certainly be said that it enjoys eternal life.'

But the delight caused in the soul by that flaming of the Holy Spirit is so sublime that it teaches the soul what is the savour of eternal life. For that reason it speaks of the flame as living<sup>1</sup>; not that it is not always living, but because its effect is to make the soul live spiritually in God, and experience the life of God, even as David says: 'My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God.'<sup>2</sup> There was no necessity for him to use the word 'living,' since God is ever living; he uses it to show that spirit and sense had a living experience of God, being wrought in God—which is to have experience<sup>3</sup> of the living God, that is to say, the life of God and life eternal. David spoke in that passage of the living God because he had had experience of Him in a living manner, albeit not perfectly, but he had had as it were a foretaste of eternal life.<sup>4</sup> And thus in this flame the soul has so living a perception of God and experiences Him with such great sweetness and delight that it says: 'Oh, living flame of love!'

### That tenderly woundest

7. That is, that touchest me tenderly with Thy love. For, inasmuch as this flame is a flame of Divine life, it wounds the soul with the tenderness of the life of God; and so deeply and profoundly does it wound it and fill it with tenderness that it causes it to melt in love, so that there may be fulfilled in it that which came to pass to the Bride in the Song of Songs. She conceived such great tenderness that she melted away, wherefore she says in that place: 'When the Spouse spake, my soul melted.'<sup>5</sup> For this is the effect that the speaking of God causes in the soul.

8. But how can we say that this flame wounds the soul, when there is nothing in the soul to be wounded, since it is wholly consumed by the fire of love? It is a marvellous thing: for, as love is never idle, but is continually in motion, it is ever throwing out sparks, like a flame, in every direction; and, as the office<sup>6</sup> of love is to wound; that it may enkindle with love and cause delight, so, when it is as it were a living

<sup>1</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'how is it a thing incredible to say that in this flaming of the Holy Spirit it enjoys a foretaste of eternal life, though this cannot be perfectly, since that is not permitted by the conditions of this life? For this reason it speaks of this flame as living.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxxxiii, 3 [A.V., lxxxiv, 2].

<sup>3</sup> [The word translated 'have experience of' is that rendered 'be attracted by' at the beginning of this paragraph, and 'relish' near the end of the preceding one.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p. gives the Scriptural text in Latin only; then continues with only the slightest variation as far as 'experience of God'; and finally, substitutes for 'being wrought in God' 'and this is to rejoice in the living God.' C has: 'experience of God, which is to have experience of [see last note] the living God—that is, the life of God and eternal life.'

Canticles v, 6.

<sup>6</sup> G: 'the effect.'

flame, within the soul, it is ever sending forth its arrow-wounds, like most tender sparks of delicate love, joyfully and happily exercising the arts and playings<sup>1</sup> of love. Even so, in his palace, at his marriage, did Assuerus show forth his graces to Esther his bride, revealing to her there his riches<sup>2</sup> and the glory of his greatness.<sup>3</sup> Thus that which the Wise Man said in the Proverbs is now fulfilled in this soul, namely: 'I was delighted every day as I played before him at all times,<sup>4</sup> playing over the whole earth, and my delight is to be with the children of men, namely, by giving myself to them.'<sup>5</sup> Wherefore these wounds, which are the playings of God,<sup>6</sup> are the sparks of these tender touches of flame which touch the soul intermittently and proceed from the fire of love, which is not idle, but whose flames, says the stanza, strike and wound

### My soul in its deepest centre,

9. For this feast of the Holy Spirit takes place in the substance of the soul, where neither the devil nor the world nor sense can enter;<sup>7</sup> and therefore the more interior it is, the more is it secure, substantial and delectable; for the more interior it is the purer it is, and the more of purity there is in it, the more abundantly and frequently and widely does God communicate Himself. And thus the delight and rejoicing of the soul and the spirit is the greater herein because it is God that works all this and the soul of its own power does naught therein;<sup>8</sup> for the soul can do naught of itself,<sup>9</sup> save through the bodily senses and by their help, from which in this case the soul is very free and very far removed, its only business being the reception of God, Who alone can work in the depth of the soul, without the aid of the senses, and can move the soul in that which it does.<sup>10</sup> And thus all the movements of such a soul are Divine; and, although they come from Him, they belong to the soul likewise, for God works them in the soul, with its own aid, since it gives its will and consent thereto.<sup>11</sup> And, since to say

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'the arts and devices.'

<sup>2</sup> G abbreviates: 'show forth his riches to Esther his bride.' E.p.: 'show forth his riches to the fair Esther.'

<sup>3</sup> [Esther ii, 17-18.]

<sup>4</sup> G, T, e.p. omit: 'as I played before him at all times.'

<sup>5</sup> [Proverbs viii, 30-1.]

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'of Divine knowledge.'

<sup>7</sup> Thus e.p.: The MSS. [and P. Silverio] read: 'where neither the centre of sense nor the devil can enter.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. adds: 'in the sense that we shall presently describe.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'can do naught naturally and by its own industry.'

<sup>10</sup> [Lit., 'in itself in the work.'] G: 'He alone can make the soul work, and can move, etc.' A, B, omit 'in itself.' C has: 'in itself and in the work.'

<sup>11</sup> E.p.: 'He alone, without the aid of the senses, can work and move the soul and work within it, in its own depth; and thus all the movements of such a soul are Divine; and, although they come from God, they belong likewise to the soul.'

that He wounds the soul in its deepest centre is to imply that the soul has other centres which are less deep, it is necessary to explain in what way this is so.

10. In the first place, it must be known that the soul, inasmuch as it is spirit, has not height and depth, nor greater or lesser degrees of profundity in its own being, as have bodies that can be measured.<sup>1</sup> For, since there are no parts in the soul, there is no difference between its inward and its outward being; it is all the same, and it has no depths of greater or lesser profundity in a way that can be measured<sup>2</sup>; for it cannot be more enlightened in one part than in another, as is the case with physical bodies, but the whole of it is enlightened in one manner, either to a greater or to a lesser degree, in the same way as the air is enlightened or unenlightened to a greater or a lesser degree.<sup>3</sup>

11. We term<sup>4</sup> the deepest centre of a thing the farthest point to which its being and virtue and the force of its operation and movement can attain, and beyond which they cannot pass. Thus fire or a stone has natural movement and power, and strength to reach the centre of its sphere, and cannot pass beyond it, neither can help remaining in it, save by reason of some contrary impediment. Accordingly, we shall say that a stone, when it is within the earth, is in<sup>5</sup> its centre, because it is within the sphere of its activity and movement, which is the element of earth; but it is not in the deepest part of that element, which is the middle of the earth, because it still has power and force to descend and to attain thither if that which impedes it be taken away; and when it attains to its centre and there remains to it no more power of its own to move farther, we shall say that it is in the deepest centre.

12. The centre of the soul is God; and, when the soul has attained to Him according to the whole capacity of its being,<sup>6</sup> and according to the force of its operation, it will have reached the last and the deep centre of the soul, which will be when with all its powers it loves and understands and enjoys God; and so long as it attains not as far as this, although it be in God, Who is its centre by grace and by His own communication, still, if it has the power of movement to go farther and strength to do more, and is not satisfied, then, although it is in the centre, it is not in the deepest centre, since it is capable of going still

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'quantitative bodies,' i.e. bodies that contain matter, have bulk.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'in a way that can be measured.'

<sup>3</sup> G omits: 'and it has no depths . . . measured' and from 'but the whole' to the end of the paragraph. A omits from 'and it has no depths' to the end of the paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'in the same way as the air. But, setting aside this acceptance of the measurable [*quantitativa*] and material depth and centre, we term.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'is, as it were, in.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'according to its being.'

farther. Love<sup>1</sup> unites the soul with God, and, the more degrees of love the soul has, the more profoundly does it enter into God and the more is it centred in Him<sup>2</sup>; and thus<sup>3</sup> we can say that, as are the degrees of love of God, so are the centres, each one deeper than another,<sup>4</sup> which the soul has in God; these are the many mansions which, He said, were in His Father's house.<sup>5</sup> And thus the soul which has one degree of love is already in its centre in God,<sup>6</sup> since one degree of love suffices for a soul to abide in Him through grace. If it have two degrees of love, it will have entered into<sup>7</sup> another and a more interior centre with God; and, if it attain to three, it will have entered into the third. If it attain to the last degree, the love of God will succeed in wounding the soul even in its deepest centre—that is, in transforming and enlightening it as regards all the being and power and virtue of the soul, such as it is capable of receiving, until it be brought into such a state that it appears to be God.<sup>8</sup> In this state the soul is like the crystal that is clear and pure; the more degrees of light it receives, the greater concentration of light there is in it, and this enlightenment continues to such a degree that at last it attains a point at which the light is centred in it with such copiousness that it comes to appear to be wholly light, and cannot be distinguished from the light, for it is enlightened to the greatest possible extent and thus appears to be light itself.

13. And thus, when the soul says that the flame wounds it in its deepest centre, it means that it wounds it in the farthest point attained by its own substance<sup>9</sup> and virtue and power. This it says to indicate the copiousness and<sup>10</sup> abundance of its glory and delight, which is the greater and the more tender when the soul is the more fervently and substantially transformed and centred in God. This is something much greater than comes to pass in the ordinary union of love, because of the greater fervency of the fire, which here, as we say, gives forth living flame. For this soul, which is now in such sweetness and glory,

<sup>1</sup> C adds: 'which is the strength and virtue of the soul.'

<sup>2</sup> G: 'and finds itself with Him.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'and thus, according to this way of speaking which we are following.'

<sup>4</sup> [Lit., 'one more than another.'] G: 'some more interior than others.'

<sup>5</sup> [St. John xiv, 2.]

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'is already in God, Who is its centre.'

<sup>7</sup> [Lit., 'will have centred itself in,' and similarly in the following clause.]

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'into the third. And if it attain to a very profound degree of love, the love of God will succeed in wounding that which we call the deepest [or "profoundest"] centre of the soul, and the soul will be transformed and enlightened in a very lofty degree, according to its being, power and virtue, until it be brought into such a state that it is very like to God.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'that it wounds it by touching most deeply its own substance.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: omits 'copiousness and.'

and the soul that enjoys only the ordinary union of love, are in a certain way comparable respectively to the fire of God<sup>1</sup> which, says Isaias, is in Sion, and which signifies the Church Militant, and to the furnace of God which was in Jerusalem and which signifies the vision of peace.<sup>2</sup> For the soul in this state is like a furnace enkindled, the vision whereof is, as we say, the more peaceful and glorious and tender in proportion as the flame of this furnace is more vehemently enkindled than common fire. And thus, when the soul feels that this living flame is communicating all blessings to it after a living manner, because this Divine love brings everything with it, it says: 'Oh, living flame of love, that tenderly woundest.' This is as though it were to say: Oh, love enkindled, that art tenderly glorifying me with thy loving movements in the greatest capacity and power of my soul, that is to say, art giving me Divine intelligence according to the entire capacity of my understanding, and communicating love to me according to the utmost power of my will, and delighting me in the substance of the soul with the affluence and copiousness of the sweetness of Thy Divine contact and substantial union, according to its utmost purity and the capacity of my memory.<sup>3</sup> This comes to pass in a greater degree than it is possible for the soul to describe at the time when this flame uprises in it.

14. Now, inasmuch as the soul has been purged with respect to its faculties and to its substance,<sup>4</sup> and has been made most pure, Wisdom absorbs it, in a profound and subtle and sublime manner, by means of its flame; the which Wisdom reacheth from one end even to another by reason of her purity.<sup>5</sup> And in that absorption of wisdom the Holy Spirit brings to pass the glorious vibrations of His flame, of which we have spoken; wherefore, since it is so sweet, the soul then says:

**Since thou art no longer oppressive,<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> G abbreviates: 'This is something much greater than in the communion of love, and thus these souls are comparable [respectively] to the fire of God.'

<sup>2</sup> [Isaias xxxi, 9.]

<sup>3</sup> B, Gr, T: 'of my memory and freedom' [*anchura*: *lit.*, 'breadth']. E.p.: 'according to the utmost freedom of my will: that is, by raising to the greatest height, through the Divine intelligence, the capacity of my understanding, in the most intense fervour of my will, and in a substantial union, as has already been described.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'Now, inasmuch as the soul has been wholly purged.'

<sup>5</sup> [Wisdom vii, 24.]

<sup>6</sup> [The word *esquiva* cannot be rendered by a single word. Its commonest meanings fall into two categories: (1) shy, reserved, disdainful; (2) harsh, unsocial, rough-mannered. Apart from the difficulties in the metaphorical use of the second group of these words, however, the definition at the beginning of § 15 suggests the employment of an adjective corresponding to one of the three verbs given which are similar in sense.]

15. That is to say, since thou dost no longer afflict or oppress or weary as thou didst aforetime. For it must be known that this flame, when the soul was in the state of spiritual purgation<sup>1</sup>—that is, when it was entering upon contemplation—was not as friendly<sup>2</sup> and sweet to it as it now is in this state of union. And we must tarry here a little in order to explain how this comes to pass.<sup>3</sup>

16. Here it must be known that, before this Divine fire of love is introduced into the substance of the soul, and is united with it, by means of a purity and purgation which is perfect and complete,<sup>4</sup> this flame is wounding the soul, and destroying and consuming in it the imperfections of its evil habits; and this is the operation of the Holy Spirit, wherein He prepares it for Divine union and the transformation of its substance<sup>5</sup> in God through love. For the same fire of love which afterwards is united with the soul and glorifies it<sup>6</sup> is that which aforetime assailed it in order to purge it; even as the fire that penetrates the log of wood is the same that first of all attacked and wounded it with its flame, cleansing and stripping it of its accidents of ugliness,<sup>7</sup> until, by means of its heat, it had prepared it to such a degree that it could enter it and transform it into itself. In this operation the soul endures great suffering and experiences grievous afflictions in its spirit, which at times overflow into the senses, at which times this flame is very oppressive. For in this preparatory state of purgation the flame is not bright to it, but dark. Neither is it sweet to it, but grievous; for, although at times it kindles within it the heat of love, this is accompanied by torment and affliction. And it is not delectable to it, but arid; it brings it neither refreshment nor peace, but consumes and proves it; neither is it glorious to it, but rather it makes it miserable and bitter, by means of the spiritual light of self-knowledge which it sheds upon it, for God sends fire, as Jeremias says, into its bones,<sup>8</sup> and tries it by fire, as David says likewise.

17. And thus at this time the soul also suffers great darkness in the understanding, many aridities and afflictions in the will and grievous knowledge of its miseries in the memory, for the eye of its spiritual

<sup>1</sup> C: 'spiritual perfection.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'as peaceful.' A reads: 'entering upon contemplation, did not deal with it sweetly as now it does in this state of union.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits this last sentence.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'into the inmost depth of the soul, and is united with it, by means of a perfect purity and purgation.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'for Divine union and transformation.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'is united with the soul in this glory of love.'

<sup>7</sup> [*Lit.*, 'its ugly accidents.'] E.p.: 'its cold accidents [*fríos* for *feos*].'

<sup>8</sup> [Lamentations i, 13.]

self-knowledge is very bright. And in its substance the soul suffers profoundly from its poverty and abandonment. Dry and cold, and at times hot, it finds relief in naught, nor is there any thought that can console it, nor can it raise its heart to God, since this flame has become so oppressive to it. Even so, says Job, did God treat him in this operation, where he says: 'Thou art changed to be cruel to me.'<sup>1</sup> For, when the soul suffers all these things together, they become like purgatory to it and any description of this falls short of the reality. At times it is indeed very little less terrible than purgatory and I can think now of no way to describe this state of oppression, and that which the soul feels and suffers in it, save by using these words of Jeremias which refer to it: 'I am the man that see my poverty by the rod of His indignation; He hath threatened me and brought me into darkness and not into light; so greatly is He turned against me and turneth His hand. My skin and my flesh He hath made old: He hath broken my bones. He hath builded a wall round about me and hath compassed me with gall and labour. He hath set me in dark places as those that are dead for ever. He hath builded against me round about, that I may not get out. He hath made my imprisonment heavy; yea, and when I have lifted up my voice and cried, He hath shut out my prayer. He hath surrounded my ways with square stones and hath turned my steps and paths upside down.'<sup>2</sup>

18. All this says Jeremias; and he continues at much greater length. Now, since this is the remedy and medicine which God gives to the soul for its many infirmities, that He may bring it health, the soul must needs suffer in the purgation and remedy, according to the nature of its sickness. For here its heart is laid upon the coals, so that every kind of evil spirit is driven away from it;<sup>3</sup> and here its infirmities are continually brought to light and are laid bare before its eyes that it may feel them, and then they are cured. And that which aforetime was hidden and set deep within the soul is now seen and felt by it, in the light and heat of the fire, whereas aforetime it saw nothing. Even so, in the water and smoke that the fire drives out of the wood, are seen the humidity and the frigidity which it had aforetime, though this was realized by none. But now, being brought near to this flame, the soul clearly sees and feels its miseries, for—oh, wondrous thing!—there arise within it contraries against contraries, some of which, as the philosophers<sup>4</sup> say,

<sup>1</sup> Job xxx, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Lamentations iii, 1-9.

<sup>3</sup> G: 'so that every kind of torment is wrought within it.'

<sup>4</sup> G: 'the physycists.'

become visible in reacting to others; and they make war in the soul, striving to expel each other in order that they may reign within it. For, as this flame is of brightest light, and assails the soul, its light shines in the darkness of the soul, which is as dark as the light is bright; and then the soul is conscious of its natural darkness, which opposes itself to the supernatural light, and it is not conscious of the supernatural light, because the darkness comprehends it not. And thus it will be conscious of this its natural darkness for so long as the light beats upon it, for souls can have no perception of their darkness until they come near to the Divine light, and only when the darkness has been driven out is the soul illumined and able to see the light, its eye having been cleansed and strengthened. For, to sight that is weak and not clear, infinite light is total darkness and the faculty suffers deprivation through excess of sense.<sup>1</sup>

19. And thus this flame was oppressive to the soul in the sight of its understanding, for, being both loving and tender, the flame assails the will in a loving and a tender manner; and the hardness of the one is felt by comparison with the tenderness of the other and the aridity of the one by comparison with the love of the other. The will is conscious of its natural hardness and aridity with respect to God and is not conscious of love and tenderness; for hardness and aridity cannot comprehend these other contrary things until they are driven out by them and love and tenderness of God reign in the will, for two contraries cannot co-exist in one subject. And in the same way, since this flame is very extensive, the will is conscious of its littleness by comparison with it, and thus it suffers great affliction until it acts upon it and dilates it and gives it greater capacity. And in this way the flame has been oppressive to it according to the will, since the sweet food of love is insipid to a palate that is not weaned from other affections. And finally, since this flame is of vast wealth and goodness and delight, the soul, which of itself has great poverty and has no good thing of its own, nor can give any satisfaction, is clearly conscious of its poverty and misery and wickedness by contrast with this wealth and goodness and delight of the flame (for wickedness comprehends not goodness, and so forth) until this flame succeeds in purifying the soul, and together with transformation gives it riches, glories and delights. In this way the flame was at first oppressive to it, and in this way the soul has ordinarily

<sup>1</sup> [The phrase *el excelente sensible* is difficult, and P. Gurdon suggests to me an emendation *excedente*. That this is the sense of the phrase I have little doubt, but the *eminente* of the second redaction hardly justifies a change in the original text.]

to endure the worst possible suffering in its substance and faculties, experiencing great anguish and affliction from the battle which is being waged by the contrary forces within its suffering self. God, Who is all perfection, wars against all the imperfect habits of the soul, and, purifying the soul<sup>1</sup> with the heat of His flame, He uproots these habits from it, and prepares it, so that at last He may enter it and be united with it by His sweet, peaceful and glorious love, as is the fire when it has entered the wood.

20. This severe purgation comes to pass in few souls—in those alone whom He desires to raise to some degree of union by means of contemplation; and those who are to be raised to the highest degree of all are the most severely purged. This happens as follows. When God desires to bring the soul forth from its ordinary state—that is, from its natural way and operation—to a spiritual life, and to lead it from meditation to contemplation, which is a state rather heavenly than earthly, wherein He communicates Himself through union of love, He begins at once to communicate Himself to the spirit, which is still impure and imperfect, and has evil habits, so that each soul suffers according to the degree of its imperfection; and at times this purgation is in some ways as grievous to the soul whom it is preparing for the reception of perfect union here below as is that of purgatory, wherein we are purged in order to see God in the life to come.

21. As to the intensity of this purgation—when it is greater and when less, and when it is according to the will and when according to the understanding or the memory, and when and how it is according to the substance of the soul, and likewise when it affects the entire soul and when its sensual part only, and how it may be known when it is each of these—we have treated this in the *Dark Night of the Ascent of Mount Carmel* and it affects not our purpose here, wherefore I say no more of it.<sup>2</sup> It suffices here to know that God Himself,<sup>3</sup> Who desires to enter the soul by union and transformation of love, is He that aforetime was assailing it and purging it with the light and heat of His Divine flame, even as the fire that enters the wood is the same fire that has prepared it before entering it. And thus that very flame<sup>4</sup> that is here

<sup>1</sup> C: 'and, shedding Himself upon the soul.' [The word translated 'purifying' is normally applied to leather, and means 'tanning,' 'dressing.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits the whole of § 20, the latter part of § 19, and this first sentence of § 21.

<sup>3</sup> A abbreviates: 'from meditation to contemplation, wherein He communicates Himself through union of love. And finally, abbreviating as much as is possible, it suffices that God Himself.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'of His Divine flame. And thus that very flame.'

sweet to the soul was aforetime bitter<sup>1</sup> to it. It is therefore as if the soul were to say: Since not only art thou not dark to me as thou wert aforetime, but art the Divine light of my understanding,<sup>2</sup> wherewith I can look upon thee, and dost not only not cause my weakness to faint,<sup>3</sup> but art rather the strength of my will wherewith I can love thee and enjoy thee, now that it is wholly converted into Divine love, and since thou art not pain and affliction to the substance of my soul,<sup>4</sup> but art rather its glory and delights and boundless freedom, therefore may there be said of me that which is sung in the Divine Songs,<sup>5</sup> in these words: 'Who is this that cometh up from the desert, abounding in delights, leaning upon her Beloved and scattering love on every side?'<sup>6</sup>

**Perfect me now if it be thy will,**

22. That is to say: Perfect and consummate the spiritual marriage in me with the beatific vision of Thyself. For, although it is true that in this state that is so lofty, the more completely transformed is the soul the more conformed is it, for it knows nothing of itself, neither is able to ask anything for itself, but all is for its Beloved; for charity seeks nothing of its own, but only the things of the Beloved;<sup>7</sup> nevertheless, since it still lives in hope, and thus cannot fail to be conscious of something that is lacking, it sighs deeply, though with sweetness and joy,<sup>8</sup> in proportion as it still lacks complete possession of the adoption of God's sonship, wherein, when its glory is consummated, its desire will be at rest. This desire, although here below the soul may have closer union<sup>9</sup> with God, will never be satisfied until this glory shall appear,<sup>10</sup> especially if it has already tasted the sweetness and delight thereof,<sup>11</sup> which it has in this state. This sweetness is such that, had God not granted a favour to its flesh, and covered its natural being with His right hand (as He did to Moses in the rock, that he might see His glory and not die,<sup>12</sup> for from this right hand the natural being receives refreshment and delight rather than harm), it would have died at each touch

<sup>1</sup> [*esquiva*.]

<sup>2</sup> A omits 'of my understanding.'

<sup>3</sup> A, G omit 'my weakness.'

<sup>4</sup> A, e.p.: 'and affliction to my soul.'

<sup>5</sup> A, G: 'in the Songs.' E: 'which is said in the Songs.'

<sup>6</sup> [Canticles viii, 5. The quotation ends at the word 'Beloved.']

<sup>7</sup> I Corinthians xiii, 5. E.p.: 'for it knows nothing, neither seeks to ask anything, and it looks not for itself, but for its Beloved in everything, for charity seeks nothing save the good and glory of the Beloved.'

<sup>8</sup> A omits 'though with sweetness and joy.'

<sup>9</sup> G: 'may be more [closely] united.' E.p.: 'may be more [closely] joined.'

<sup>10</sup> Psalm xvi, 15 [A.V., xvii, 15].

<sup>11</sup> E.p.: 'the delight and the expectation thereof.'

<sup>12</sup> [Exodus xxxiii, 22.]

of this flame, and its natural being would have been corrupted, since its lower part would have no means of enduring so great and sublime a fire.<sup>1</sup>

23. Wherefore this desire and the soul's entreaty for it are not accompanied by pain, for the soul in this state is no longer capable of pain, but its entreaty is made with great sweetness and delight and conformity of the reason and the senses.<sup>2</sup> It is for this reason that it says: 'If it be Thy will.' For the will and desire are to such an extent united with God<sup>3</sup> that the soul regards it as its glory that it should fulfil the will of God in it. Such are the glimpses of glory and such is the love that filters through the crevices of the door, in order that it may enter, though it cannot do so because of the smallness of our earthly house,<sup>4</sup> that the soul would have little love if it entreated not to be allowed to enter into that perfection and consummation of love. Furthermore, the soul now sees that in the power of that delectable communication the Holy Spirit is impelling and inviting it, by wondrous ways and with sweet affections, to that boundless glory which He is setting before its eyes, saying that which is said to the Bride in the Songs, namely: 'See (she says) that which my Spouse is saying to me: "Arise<sup>5</sup> and make haste, my love, my dove, my fair one, and come; for winter is now past and the rain is over and gone and the flowers have appeared in our land. And the time of pruning has come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land,<sup>6</sup> and the fig tree has put forth her figs and the vines in flower have yielded their fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come, my dove, into the holes of the rock, into the cavern of the wall; show me thy face; let thy voice sound in my ears; for thy voice is sweet, and thy face comely."'<sup>7</sup> All these things the soul most clearly<sup>8</sup> perceives that the Holy Spirit is saying to her in that sweet and tender flame.<sup>9</sup> Wherefore the soul here makes answer: 'Perfect me now if it be Thy will.' Herein she makes Him those two petitions which in Saint Matthew He<sup>10</sup> commanded us to make: *Adveniat regnum tuum. Fiat*

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'it seems that it would have died at each touch of this flame, since its lower part would not have the strength to endure so great and sublime a fire.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'Wherefore this desire is not accompanied by pain, for the soul in this state is no longer in a condition of pain, but its entreaty is made with great sweetness and delight and conformity.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'each in its own way.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'the crevices . . . earthly house.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'in the Songs: Arise.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'And the time . . . in our land.'

<sup>7</sup> Canticles ii, 10-14.

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'most clearly.'

<sup>9</sup> [*Lit.*, 'flaming.'] E.p. has 'flame.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: 'which Christ our Saviour.'

*voluntas tua.*<sup>1</sup> This is as much as to say: Give me this kingdom perfectly, as is Thy will, and, that this may come to pass:

**Break the web of this sweet encounter.**

24. For it is this web which hinders so important a business as this, since it is easy to reach God once the separating obstacles and webs are taken away. These webs which must be broken if we are to possess God perfectly are reduced to three, namely: the temporal, which comprises every creature; the natural, which comprises the operations<sup>2</sup> and inclinations that are purely natural; and the sensual, which comprises only union of the soul in the body, which is sensual and animal life, whereof Saint Paul says: 'We know that if this our earthly house be dissolved we have a dwelling-place of God in the heavens.'<sup>3</sup> The first two webs must of necessity be broken in order that we may attain to this possession of the union of God through love,<sup>4</sup> wherein all things of the world are put aside and renounced,<sup>5</sup> and all the natural affections and appetites are mortified, and the operations of the soul become Divine. All this was broken by the encounters of the soul with this flame when it was oppressive to it; for, in spiritual purgation, as we have said above,<sup>6</sup> the soul succeeds in breaking these two webs and in being united, as it now is, and there remains to be broken only the third web of the life of sense. For this reason the soul here speaks of a web and not of webs; for there is now no other web than this, which, being already so delicate and fine and so greatly spiritualized by this union, is attacked<sup>7</sup> by the flame, not in a severe and oppressive way, as were the others, but sweetly and delectably. And thus the death of such souls is ever<sup>8</sup> sweeter and gentler than was their whole life; for they die amid the delectable encounters and impulses of love, like the swan, which sings most sweetly when it is about to die and is at the point of death.<sup>9</sup> For this reason David said: 'Precious is the death of the just'<sup>10</sup>; for at such a time the rivers of love of the soul are about to enter the sea,<sup>11</sup> and they are so broad and dense and motionless<sup>12</sup> that they seem to

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew vi, 10.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'which comprises all the operations.'

<sup>3</sup> [2 Corinthians v, 1.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'this possession of God through the union of love.'

<sup>5</sup> Gr.: 'denounced.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'as we have said above.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'no other web than this, which is attacked.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'ever.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p. omits: 'and is at the point of death.' [The phrase rendered 'is about to die' may also mean 'wishes to die.']

<sup>10</sup> Psalm cxv, 15 [A.V., cxvi, 15].

<sup>11</sup> E.p.: 'the sea of loving.'

<sup>12</sup> [The word translated 'dense and motionless' is *represados*, 'restrained,' 'dammed up.']

be seas already. The beginning and the end<sup>1</sup> unite together to accompany the just man as he departs and goes forth to his kingdom, and praises are heard from the ends of the earth, which are the glory of the just man.<sup>2</sup>

25. When, at that time, amid these glorious encounters, the soul feels itself very near to<sup>3</sup> going forth in abundance to the perfect possession of its kingdom, since it sees itself to be pure and rich<sup>4</sup> and prepared for this, God permits it in this state to see His beauty,<sup>5</sup> and entrusts it with the gifts and virtues that He has given it, and all this turns into love and praise, since there is no leaven to corrupt the mass. And when it sees that it has only now to break the frail web of this human condition of natural life wherein it feels itself to be enmeshed and imprisoned, and its liberty to be impeded, it desires to be loosed and to see itself with Christ,<sup>6</sup> and to burst these bonds of spirit and of flesh, which are of very different kinds, so that each may receive its deserts, the flesh remaining upon the earth and the spirit returning to God that gave it.<sup>7</sup> For the flesh<sup>8</sup> profiteth nothing, as Saint John says,<sup>9</sup> but has rather been a hindrance to this spiritual good; and the soul grieves that a life which is so high should be obstructed by another that is so low, and therefore begs that this web may be broken.<sup>10</sup>

26. This life is called a web for three reasons: first, because of the bond that exists between spirit and flesh; second, because it makes a division between God and the soul; third, because even as a web is not so opaque and dense but that the light can shine through it, even so in this state this bond appears to it to be a very fine web, since it is greatly spiritualized and enlightened and refined, so that the Divinity cannot but shine through it. And when the soul becomes conscious of the power of the life to come, it feels keenly the weakness of this other life, which appears to it as a very fine web—even as a spider's web, which is the name that David gives to it, saying: 'Our years shall be considered as a spider.'<sup>11</sup> And it is much less still in the eyes of a soul that is so greatly enlarged; for, since this soul has entered into the con-

<sup>1</sup> [P. Silverio's text has: 'the first and the last.' E.p. reads: 'the beginning and the end, the first and the last.']

<sup>2</sup> [Cf. Isaiah xxiv, 16.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'and on the very point of.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'pure and rich, in so far as is in conformity with the faith and with the state of this life.'

<sup>5</sup> [Or, 'its (own) beauty.']

<sup>6</sup> Philippians i, 23.

<sup>7</sup> Ecclesiastes xii, 7.

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'For mortal flesh.'

<sup>9</sup> St. John vi, 64 [A.V., vi, 63].

<sup>10</sup> A omits from 'and entrusts it' to the end of the paragraph, and also the whole of the next paragraph.

<sup>11</sup> Psalm lxxxix, 9 [A.V., xc, 9]. E.p. omits this quotation.

sciousness of God, it is conscious of things in the way that God is; and in the sight of God, as David also says, a thousand years are as yesterday when it is past.<sup>1</sup> And according to Isaias all nations are as if they were not.<sup>2</sup> And they have the same importance to the soul—namely, all things are to it as nothing, and to its own eyes it is itself nothing: to it its God alone is all.

27. But here one point should be noticed. Why does the soul beg that the web may be broken, rather than be cut or allowed to wear itself out, since all these things would seem to have the same result? We may say that this is for four reasons. First, in order to use language of greater propriety, for in an encounter it is more proper to say that a thing is broken than that it is cut or wears away. Second, because love delights in the force of love and in forceful and impetuous contacts, and these are produced by breaking rather than by cutting or wearing away. Third, because love desires that the act should be very brief, since it will then be the more quickly concluded; the briefer and more spiritual is it, the greater is its power and worth. For virtue in union is stronger than virtue that is scattered; and love is introduced as form is introduced into matter, namely, in an instant, and until then there has been no act but only dispositions for an act; and thus spiritual acts which are done in an instant are for the most part dispositions of successive affections and desires, very few of which succeed in becoming acts. For this cause the Wise Man said: 'Better is the end of a prayer than the beginning.'<sup>3</sup> But those that so succeed instantly become acts in God, for which reason it is said that the short prayer penetrates the Heavens. Wherefore the soul that is prepared<sup>4</sup> can perform more acts, and acts of greater intensity, in a short time than the soul that is not prepared can perform in a long time; for the latter wastes its strength in the preparation of the spirit, and, even when this is done, the fire has not yet penetrated the wood. But into the soul that is prepared love enters continuously, for the spark seizes upon the dry fuel at its first contact; and thus the soul that is kindled in love prefers the short act

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxxix, 4 [A.V., xc, 4].

<sup>2</sup> Isaias xl, 17.

<sup>3</sup> [Ecclesiastes vii, 9.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'Second, because love delights in force and in forceful and impetuous contacts, and these are produced by breaking rather than by cutting or wearing away. Third, because the soul has so much love that it desires that this act of breaking the web should be very brief so that it may be quickly concluded; the briefer and more spiritual is it, the greater is its power and worth. For the virtue of love is here more united and stronger, and the perfection of transforming love is introduced [into the soul] as form is introduced into matter, namely, in an instant, and until then there has been no act of transformative informing, but only dispositions thereto of desires and affections successively repeated, which in very few attain to the perfect act of transformation. Wherefore the soul that is prepared, etc.'

of the breaking of the web to the duration of the act of cutting it or of waiting for it to wear away. The fourth reason is so that the web of life may the more quickly come to an end, for cutting a thing and allowing it to wear away are acts performed after greater deliberation when the thing is riper, and seem to require more time and a stage of greater maturity, whereas breaking needs not to wait for maturity or for anything else of the kind.

28. And this the soul desires—namely, that it may not have to wait until its life come naturally to an end<sup>1</sup> nor even to tarry until it be cut<sup>2</sup>—because the force of love, and the propensities which it feels, make it desire and entreat that its life may be broken<sup>3</sup> by some encounter and supernatural assault of love. For the soul in this state knows very well that it is the habit of God to take away such souls before their time in order to give them good things and to remove them from evil things, perfecting them in a short time by means of that love and giving them that which they might have gained gradually in a long time, even as the Wise Man says, in these words: 'He that is pleasing to God is made beloved, and living among sinners he was translated and taken away, lest wickedness should alter his understanding or deceit beguile his soul. Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time; for his soul was pleasing to God, therefore hastened He to take him out of the midst'.<sup>4</sup> For this reason it is a great thing for the soul to exercise itself constantly in love, so that, when it is perfected here below, it may not stay long, either in this world or in the next, before seeing God face to face.

29. But let us now see why the soul calls this interior assault of the Holy Spirit an encounter rather than by any other name. It is because, as we have said, the soul in God is conscious of an infinite desire that its life may come to an end so that it may have the consummation thereof in glory; yet, because the time is not yet come, this is not accomplished<sup>5</sup>; and thus, so that the soul may be the more completely perfected and raised up above the flesh, God makes certain assaults upon it that are glorious and Divine and after the manner of encounters—indeed, they are encounters—wherewith He penetrates the

<sup>1</sup> A omits all the rest of the chapter except for the final lines ('and since my petitions . . . for ever').

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'nor even . . . cut.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'incline it with resignation to the breaking of its life.'

<sup>4</sup> Wisdom iv, 10-11, 13-14. E.p. has 'from the world' for 'out of the midst.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. reads: '... of the Holy Spirit an encounter. The reason is that, although the soul is conscious of a great desire that its life may come to an end, yet, because the time is not yet come, this is not accomplished.'

soul continually, deifying its substance and making it Divine.<sup>1</sup> Herein He absorbs the soul, above all being, in the Being of God, for He has encountered it<sup>2</sup> and pierced it to the quick in the Holy Spirit, Whose communications are impetuous when they are full of fervour, as is this communication. This encounter, since it has a lively taste of God, the soul calls sweet; not that many other touches and encounters which it receives in this state are not also sweet and delectable, but rather that this is eminently so above all the rest; for God effects it, as we have said, in order to loose the soul and glorify it.<sup>3</sup> Wherefore the soul takes courage to say: 'Break the web of this sweet encounter.'

30. And thus this whole stanza is as though the soul were to say: Oh, flame of the Holy Spirit, that so intimately and tenderly<sup>4</sup> dost pierce the substance of my soul and cauterize it with Thy heat! Since Thou art now so loving as to show Thyself with the desire of giving Thyself to me in perfect and eternal life; if formerly my petitions did not reach Thine ears, when in their weakness my sense and spirit suffered with yearnings and fatigues of love by reason of the great weakness and impurity and the little strength of love that they had, I entreated Thee to loose me, for with desire did my soul desire Thee when my impatient love would not suffer me to be conformed with the condition of this life that Thou desiredst me to live, and the past assaults of love sufficed not in Thy sight, because they had not sufficient substance; now that I am so greatly strengthened in love that not alone do my sense and spirit<sup>5</sup> not fail before Thee, but rather my heart and my flesh are strengthened in Thy sight, they rejoice in the living God with a great conformity between their various parts. Therefore do I entreat that which Thou desirest me to entreat, and that which Thou desirest not, that desire I not, nor can I desire it,<sup>6</sup> nor does it pass through my mind to entreat it; and, since my petitions are now more effective and more reasonable in Thine eyes (for they go forth from Thee and Thou desirest them, and I pray to Thee with delight and rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, and my judgment comes forth from Thy countenance,<sup>7</sup> which comes to pass when Thou esteemest and hearest my prayers), do Thou break the slender web of this life, and let it not come to pass that age and years cut it after a natural manner.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'making it as it were Divine.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'Herein the soul absorbs the Being of God, for He has encountered it.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'perfectly.'

<sup>4</sup> C: 'so tenderly and intimately.' G: 'so tenderly.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'my spirit and sense.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'nor does it seem that I can desire it.'

<sup>7</sup> [Psalm xvi, 2.]

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'and let . . . manner.'

so that I may be able to love Thee with the fullness and satisfaction which my soul desires, without end, for ever.<sup>1</sup>

## STANZA II

**Oh, sweet burn! Oh, delectable wound! Oh, soft hand! Oh,  
delicate touch  
That savours of eternal life and pays every debt! In slaying,  
thou hast changed death into life.**

### EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza the soul explains how the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are They that effect within it this Divine work of union. Thus the 'hand,' the 'burn' and the 'touch' are in substance one and the same thing; and the soul gives them these names, inasmuch as they describe the effect which is caused by each. The 'burn' is the Holy Spirit, the 'hand' is the Father and the 'touch' is the Son. And thus the soul here magnifies the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, dwelling upon<sup>2</sup> three great favours and blessings which They work within it, since They have changed its death into life, transforming it in Themselves. The first is the delectable wound, which the soul attributes to the Holy Spirit, wherefore it is called a burn. The second is the desire for eternal life, which it attributes to the Son, and therefore calls a delicate touch. The third is a gift wherewith the soul is right well pleased, and this it attributes to the Father, and therefore calls it a soft hand. And although the soul here names the three things,<sup>3</sup> because of the properties of their effects, it addresses only one of them, saying: 'Thou hast changed death into life.' For they all work in one, and the soul attributes the whole of their work to one, and the whole of it to all of them. There follows the line:

**Oh, sweet burn!**

2. In the Book of Deuteronomy Moses says that our Lord God is a consuming fire<sup>4</sup>—that is to say, a fire of love. This fire, as it is of infinite power, is able to consume to an extent which cannot be measured, and by burning with great vehemence to transform into itself that

<sup>1</sup> C adds: 'And here the first verse [*copla*] comes to an end.'

<sup>2</sup> G: 'magnifying.'

<sup>3</sup> G, e.p.: 'names the three Persons.' G adds: 'by reason of the effects which they cause.'

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy iv, 24.

which it touches. But it burns everything according to the degree of the preparation thereof; some things more and others less; and likewise according to its own pleasure, and after the manner and at the time which it pleases. And since God is an infinite fire of love, when therefore He is pleased to touch the soul with some severity, the heat of the soul rises to such a degree that the soul believes that it is being burned with a heat greater than any other in the world. For this reason it speaks of this touch as of a burn, for it is experienced where the fire is most intense<sup>1</sup> and most concentrated, and the effect of its heat is greater than that of other fires. And when this Divine fire has transformed the substance of<sup>2</sup> the soul into itself, not only is the soul conscious of the burn, but it has itself become one burn of vehement fire.

3. And it is a wondrous thing, worthy to be related,<sup>3</sup> that, though this fire of God is so vehement and so consuming that it would consume a thousand worlds more easily than natural fire<sup>4</sup> consumes a straw of flax,<sup>5</sup> it consumes not the spirits wherein it burns, neither destroys them; but rather, in proportion to its strength and heat, it brings them delight and deifies them, burning sweetly in them by reason of the purity of their spirits.<sup>6</sup> Thus did it come to pass, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, when this fire descended with great vehemence and enkindled the disciples<sup>7</sup>; and, as Saint Gregory says, they burned inwardly with sweetness.<sup>8</sup> And it is this that the Church says, in these words: 'There came fire from Heaven, burning not but giving splendour; consuming not but enlightening.'<sup>9</sup> For, in these communications, since their object is to magnify the soul, this fire afflicts it not but rather enlarges it; it wearies it not, but delights it and makes it glorious and rich, for which cause the soul calls it sweet.

4.<sup>10</sup> And thus the happy soul that by great good fortune attains to this burning knows everything, tastes everything, does all that it desires, and prospers, and none prevails against it or touches it. For it is of this soul that the Apostle says: 'The spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man.'<sup>11</sup> *Et iterum*: 'The spiritual man searcheth all things,<sup>12</sup> yea, the deep things of God.'<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C: 'where the fire is brightest and most intense.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'the substance of.'

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'than fire.']

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'burning sweetly, according to the strength which He has given them.'

<sup>5</sup> [Acts ii, 3.]

<sup>6</sup> In officio feriæ 2<sup>a</sup> Pent.

<sup>7</sup> A omits § 4 and § 5 down to the words 'three manners.'

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 15.

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: '... of no man, and, in another place, that he penetrateth all things.'

<sup>10</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 10.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'worthy to be related.'

<sup>5</sup> G: 'a little flax.'

<sup>8</sup> Hom. XXX, in Evang.

5. Oh, the great glory of you souls that are worthy to attain to this supreme fire, which, while it has infinite power to consume and annihilate you, consumes you not, but grants you a boundless consummation<sup>1</sup> in glory! Marvel not that God should bring certain souls to such a state; for in certain ways the sun<sup>2</sup> is conspicuous for the marvellous effects which it causes; as the Holy Spirit says, it burns the mountains of the just after three manners.<sup>3</sup> Since, then, this burn is so sweet, as we have here explained, how delectable, may we believe, will it not be in one that is touched by such fire? Of this the soul would fain speak, but speaks not, limiting itself to expressing its wonder and esteem in this word 'Oh,' saying:

### Oh, delectable wound!

6. This wound is inflicted by the same burn that cures it,<sup>4</sup> and, as it is made, it is healed; for it is in some ways similar to a burn caused by natural fire, which, when it is applied to a wound, makes a greater wound, and causes the first, which has been produced by iron or in some other way, to be turned into a wound inflicted by fire; and the more it is subjected to the burning, the greater is the wound caused by the fire, until the whole of the matter is destroyed.<sup>5</sup> Even so this Divine burn of love heals the wound which has been inflicted in the soul by love, and with each application it becomes greater. For the healing of love is to hurt and wound once more that which has been hurt and wounded already, until the soul comes to be wholly dissolved in the wound of love. And in this way, when it is now completely turned into a wound of love, it regains its perfect health,<sup>6</sup> and is transformed in love and wounded in love. So in this case he that is most severely wounded is most healthy; and he that is altogether wounded is altogether healthy. Yet, even if this soul be altogether wounded and altogether healthy, the burning still performs its office, which is to wound with love; but then it has also to relieve<sup>7</sup> the wound which has been healed, after the manner aforementioned. Wherefore the soul says: 'Oh, delectable wound!' The loftier and the more sublime is the

<sup>1</sup> [The play upon the words *consumir* ('consume') and *consumar* ('consummate,' 'perfect') cannot be exactly rendered in English.]

<sup>2</sup> [*el sol*.] E.p. has 'He alone': *el solo*.

<sup>3</sup> [Ecclus. xliii, 4.] E.p. omits: 'as . . . manners.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'is cured by Him Who inflicts it.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'dissolved'—a word repeated below.]

<sup>6</sup> A omits the rest of § 6 and § 7 down to the words: 'Oh, then, thou delectable wound!'

<sup>7</sup> [The past participle of this verb (*regalar*) has also the meaning 'delectable,' and is so translated in the verse-line above, and elsewhere in the text.]

fire of love that has caused the wound, the more delectable is the wound. For, as the Holy Spirit inflicted the wound in order to relieve it, and as He has a great desire and will to relieve it, the wound, therefore, is great, in order that it<sup>1</sup> may be greatly relieved.

7. Oh, happy wound, inflicted by One Who cannot but heal!<sup>2</sup> Oh, fortunate and most happy wound, inflicted only for the relief<sup>3</sup> and delight of the soul! Great is the wound, since great is He that has inflicted it; and great is the relief, since the fire of love is infinite and is measured according to its capacity.<sup>4</sup> Oh, then, thou delectable wound! So much the more sublimely delectable art thou in proportion as the burn of love has touched the inmost centre of the substance of the soul,<sup>5</sup> burning all that was capable of being burned, that it might relieve all that was capable of being relieved. This burn and this wound, in my opinion, represent the highest degree to which the soul can attain in this state. But there are many other ways<sup>6</sup> wherein the soul attains not so far as this, nor are they like this; for this is a touch of the Divinity in the soul, without any form or figure whether formal or imaginary.

8. But there is another and a most sublime way wherein the soul may be cauterized, which is after this manner. It will come to pass that, when the soul is enkindled in this love, although not so perfectly<sup>7</sup> as in the way of which we have spoken (though it is most meet that it should be so with a view to that which I am about to describe), the soul will be conscious of an assault upon it made by a seraph armed with a dart<sup>8</sup> of most enkindled love, which will pierce that enkindled coal of fire, the soul, or, to speak more exactly, that flame, and will cauterize it in a sublime manner; and, when it has pierced and cauterized it thus, the flame will rush forth and will rise suddenly and vehemently, even as comes to pass in a white-hot furnace or forge; when they stir and poke the fire,<sup>9</sup> the flame becomes hotter and the fire revives, and then the soul is conscious of this wound, with a delight which transcends all description. For, not only is it moved through and through by the stirring and the impetuous motion given to its fire,<sup>10</sup> wherein the heat

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'in order that the soul that receives it.'

<sup>2</sup> C: 'Who can do naught else than comfort.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'and is measured according to its capacity.'

<sup>3</sup> [regalo.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'touches the inmost centre of the soul.'

<sup>5</sup> C adds: 'in which God cauterizes the soul.'

<sup>6</sup> Gr: 'although it is not so much cauterized.'

<sup>7</sup> [dardo. The same word is used by St. Teresa in her description (*Life*, Chap. xxix) of the transverberation of her heart, though the pictorial representations of that event generally show the seraph armed with a long spear.]

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'when they disturb the fuel and turn it over.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: '... moved when they turn the fuel over and by the motion given to its fire.'

and melting of love are great, but the keen wound<sup>1</sup> and the healing herb wherewith the effect of the dart was being greatly assuaged<sup>2</sup> are felt by it in the substance of the spirit, even as in the heart of him whose soul has been thus pierced.

9. Who can speak fittingly of this grain of mustard seed which now seems to remain in the centre of the heart of the spirit, and which is the point of the wound and the refinement of its delight<sup>3</sup>? For the soul feels that there has remained within it, as it were, a grain of mustard seed, most minute, highly enkindled and wondrous keen;<sup>4</sup> keen also and enkindled even to the circumference to which its substance extends, and the virtue of that point of the wound. Thence the substance and the virtue of the herb are subtly diffused through all the spiritual and substantial<sup>5</sup> veins of the soul, according to its potentiality and the strength of the heat.<sup>6</sup> And the soul feels its love to be increasing and to be growing in strength and refinement to such a degree that it seems to have within it seas of fire which reach to the farthest heights and depths of the spheres, filling it wholly with love.<sup>7</sup>

10. And that whereof the soul now has fruition cannot be further described, save by saying that the soul is now conscious of the fitness of the comparison of the Kingdom of Heaven with the grain of mustard seed made in the Gospel; which grain, because of its great heat, small as it is, grows into a great tree.<sup>8</sup> For the soul sees that it has become like a vast fire of love<sup>9</sup> and the point of its virtue is in the heart of the spirit.

11. Few souls attain to this state, but some have done so, especially those whose virtue and spirituality was to be transmitted to the succession of their children. For God bestows spiritual wealth and strength upon the head of a house according as He means his descendants to inherit the first-fruits of the Spirit.

12. Let us return, then, to the work done by that seraph, which in

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'the keen and efficacious wound.'

<sup>2</sup> [This seems the most probable of various interpretations. The literal translation would read: 'the herb wherewith the iron was being intensely (or keenly) tempered.']

<sup>3</sup> C: 'of this intimate point of the wound which seems to remain in the centre of the heart of the spirit, which is where the refinement of its delight is felt?' E.p. (from the end of § 8) has: 'are felt by the soul [which also feels] the depth of its spirit pierced and the refinement of the delight [of this], whereof none can speak fittingly.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds here: 'in the inmost heart of the spirit, which is the point of the wound' and continues: '[Here] is the substance and virtue, etc.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and substantial.' G: 'through all the spiritual veins, nerves and arteries of the soul.'

<sup>6</sup> A omits the rest of this paragraph and the whole of the two paragraphs following.

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'seas of fire which fill it wholly with love.'

<sup>8</sup> St. Matthew xiii, 31-2.

<sup>9</sup> G and e.p. end the sentence here.

truth is to strike and to wound. If the effect of the wound should sometimes be permitted to pass outward to the bodily senses, to an extent corresponding to the interior wound, the effect of the impact and the wound will be felt without, as came to pass when the seraph wounded the soul of Saint Francis with love, and in that way the effect of those wounds became outwardly visible. For God bestows no favours upon the body without bestowing them first and principally upon the soul. And then, the greater is the delight and strength of love which causes the wound within, the greater is the pain of that wound without,<sup>1</sup> and if the one grows, the other grows likewise. This comes to pass because, since these souls have been purged and made strong in God, all that pertains to God and is strong and sweet is a delight<sup>2</sup> to them in their spirits, which are strong and healthy; to their weak and corruptible flesh, however, it causes pain and torture; wherefore it is a wondrous thing to feel the pain growing with the pleasure. This wonder Job perceived in his wounds, when he said to God: 'Turning to me, Thou tormentest me wonderfully.'<sup>3</sup> For it is a great marvel and a thing worthy of the abundance of God and of the sweetness which He has laid up for them that fear Him,<sup>4</sup> that, the greater is the pain and torment of which the soul is conscious, the greater is its pleasure and delight.

13. Oh, immeasurable greatness, in all things showing thyself omnipotent! Who but Thou, Lord, could cause sweetness in the midst of bitterness and pleasure in torment? How delectable a wound, then, art thou, since the deeper is thy mark, the greater delight dost thou cause! But when the wound is within the soul, and is not communicated without, it can be far more intense and sublime;<sup>5</sup> for, as the flesh is the bridle of the spirit, so, when the blessings of the spirit are communicated to it, the flesh draws in the rein and curbs this fleet steed and restrains its great energy;<sup>6</sup> for the body, being then corrupted, presses down the soul, and the habits of life oppress the spiritual sense when it muses upon many things.<sup>7</sup> Wherefore, he that will place great reliance upon bodily sense will never become a very spiritual person.

14. This I say for those who think that they can attain to the powers

<sup>1</sup> A omits the rest of this paragraph and the first two sentences of the paragraph following.

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: '... strong in God, the strong and sweet Spirit of God is a delight.'

<sup>3</sup> Job x, 16.

<sup>5</sup> G: 'and solid.'

<sup>7</sup> Wisdom ix, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xxx, 20 [A.V., xxxi, 19].

<sup>6</sup> C: 'its grace and energy.'

and the height of the spirit by means of the power and operation of sense alone, which is low. They cannot attain thereto save when bodily sense is left without. It is quite different when the affection of feeling overflows from spirit into sense, for herein, as Saint Paul says, there may be much spirituality;<sup>1</sup> for, when the intensity of his realization of the sufferings of Christ was so great that it overflowed into his body, he writes to the Galatians, saying: 'I bear in my body the marks of my Lord Jesus.'<sup>2</sup> As the wound and the burn, therefore, are such as this, what will be the hand that takes part therein, and what will be the touch that causes it? This the soul describes, extolling it rather than expounding it, in the following line,<sup>3</sup> saying:

**Oh, soft hand! Oh, delicate touch**

15. Oh, hand, as generous as thou art powerful and rich, richly and powerfully dost thou give me thy gifts! Oh, soft hand, the softer for this soul, and softly laid upon it, for if thou wert to lean hardly upon it the whole world would perish; for at Thy glance alone the earth shakes,<sup>4</sup> and the nations are undone,<sup>5</sup> and the mountains crumble to pieces.<sup>6</sup> Once more, then,<sup>7</sup> I say: 'Oh, soft hand!' For whereas thou wert harsh and severe to Job,<sup>8</sup> since thou didst touch him so very heavily,<sup>9</sup> thou art laid very firmly but very lovingly and graciously upon my soul, and art as soft and as gentle to me as thou wert hard to him, touching me firmly with sweet love even as thou didst touch him with severity. For Thou slayest and Thou givest life and there is none that can flee from Thy hand. But Thou, oh, Life Divine, never slayest save to give life, even as Thou never woundest save to heal. Thou hast wounded me, oh, hand Divine, in order to heal me, and thou hast slain in me that which would have slain me, but for the life of God wherein now I see that I live. And this Thou didst with the liberality of Thy habitual<sup>10</sup> grace, through the touch wherewith Thou didst touch me—namely, the splendour of Thy glory and the image of Thy sub-

<sup>1</sup> G: 'I will not for this reason exclude the feeling which overflows from spirit into sense, as is seen in Saint Paul.'

<sup>2</sup> Galatians vi, 17.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'And thus, as are the wound and the burn, so will be the hand that takes part therein, and as is the touch, so will be He that causes it. This the soul describes in the following line.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm ciii, 32 [A.V., civ, 32].

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'the nations tremble.'

<sup>6</sup> Habacuc iii, 6.

<sup>7</sup> G abbreviates: 'softer still for this soul, as thou touchest me more firmly. Once more, then, etc.'

<sup>8</sup> Job xix, 21.

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'since thou didst touch him so heavily.'

<sup>10</sup> [Lit., 'general.'] So A, B, C, G, Gr. E.p.: 'generous.' The MSS. of the second redaction vary between 'generous' and 'gracious.' See p. 133, below.

stance, which is Thy only begotten Son;<sup>1</sup> in Whom, since He is Thy wisdom, Thou reachest from one end to another mightily through His purity.<sup>2</sup>

16. Oh, then, thou delicate touch, Thou Word, Son of God, Who, through the delicateness of Thy Divine Being, dost subtly penetrate the substance of my soul, and, touching it wholly and delicately, dost absorb it wholly in Thyself in Divine ways of sweetness which have never been heard of in the land of Chanaan, nor seen in Theman!<sup>3</sup> Oh, delicate touch of the Word, delicate, yea, wondrously delicate, to me, which, having overthrown the mountains and broken the stones in Mount Horeb with the shadow of Thy power and strength that went before Thee, didst reveal Thyself to the Prophet with the whisper of gentle air.<sup>4</sup> Oh, gentle air, that art so delicate and gentle!<sup>5</sup> Say, how dost Thou touch the soul so gently and delicately when Thou art so terrible and powerful? Oh, blessed, twice blessed, the soul whom Thou dost touch so gently<sup>6</sup> though Thou art so terrible and powerful! Tell it out to the world. But nay, tell it not to the world, for the world knows naught of air so gentle, and will not feel Thee, because it can neither receive Thee nor see Thee.<sup>7</sup>

17. Oh, my God and my life! They whom Thou refinest<sup>8</sup> shall know Thee and behold Thee when Thou touchest them, since purity corresponds with purity.<sup>9</sup> Thou dost touch them the more delicately because Thou art hidden in the substance of their souls, which have been beautified and made delicate,<sup>10</sup> and because they are withdrawn from all creatures and from all traces of creature, and Thou hidest them in the hiding-place of Thy presence,<sup>11</sup> which is Thy Divine Son, and dost conceal them from the disturbance of men.<sup>12</sup> Once again, then, oh, delicate touch, and again most delicate, that with the strength of Thy delicacy dost melt the soul and removest it from all other touches and makest it Thine own alone. So delicate an effect and impression dost Thou leave in the soul that every other touch, of everything

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews i, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom [vii, 24] viii, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Baruch iii, 22.

<sup>4</sup> 3 Kings [A.V., 1 Kings] xix, 11-12.

<sup>5</sup> A, G, e.p. omit: 'that art so delicate and gentle.' A also omits the rest of the paragraph.

<sup>6</sup> C: 'so delicately.' B: 'so happily and delicately.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'because it cannot receive these lofty things.' [St. John xiv, 17.]

<sup>8</sup> [Lit., 'They who become delicate': the word 'delicate' is also used below, where I render 'purity,' but the sense is evidently 'refined,' 'purified.']

<sup>9</sup> [Lit., 'delicacy . . . delicacy.']

<sup>10</sup> E.p.: 'in their souls, made delicate.'

<sup>11</sup> [Lit., 'Thy face.' Cf. Psalm xxx, 21 (A.V., xxxi, 21).]

<sup>12</sup> E.p.: 'Thou hidest them in the hidden place of Thy presence, from the disturbance of men.' A omits the remainder of this paragraph and the first sentence of the paragraph following.

else, whether high or low, will seem to it rude and gross if it touches the soul, and even the sight of other things will offend it, and to have to do with them and touch them will cause it trouble and grievous torment.

18. The more delicate is a thing, the broader and more capacious it is; and the more delicate it is, the more it becomes diffusive and communicative. Oh, then, thou delicate touch, that dost infuse Thyself the more by reason of Thy delicacy, while the vessel of my soul, through this Thy touch, becomes the simpler, purer, more delicate and more capacious! Oh, then, thou delicate touch, so delicate that, when naught<sup>1</sup> is felt in the touch, Thou dost touch the soul the more, and, by penetrating deeply within it, Thou dost make it at Thy touch the more Divine, according as Thy Divine Being<sup>2</sup> wherewith Thou dost touch the soul is far removed from the way and manner thereof and free from all outward seeming<sup>3</sup> of form and figure! Oh, then, at last, Thou delicate, most delicate touch, that touchest not the soul save with Thy most pure and simple Being, which is infinite, and therefore infinitely delicate! Wherefore it is a touch

### **That savours of eternal life**

19. Although this is not so in a perfect degree, there is indeed a certain savour herein of life eternal, as has been said above, which the soul tastes in this touch of God. And it is not incredible that this should be so if we believe, as we must believe, that this touch is substantial, that is to say, is a touch of the Substance of God in the substance of the soul;<sup>4</sup> and to this many holy men have attained in this life. Wherefore the delicacy of the delight which is felt in this touch is impossible of description; nor would I willingly speak thereof, lest it should be supposed that it is no more than that which I say; for there are no words to expound and enumerate such sublime things of God as come to pass in these souls; whereof the proper way to speak is for one that knows them to understand them inwardly and feel them and enjoy them and be silent concerning them. For the soul in this state sees that these things are in some measure like the white stone which Saint John says will be given to him that conquers, and on the stone a name shall

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'when no bulk.']

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'while the vessel of my soul, through this Thy touch, is simple and pure and has capacity to receive Thee. Oh, then, Thou delicate touch, that feelest naught material within Thyself, yet dost touch the soul the more and the more deeply, changing it from the human into the Divine, according as Thy Divine Being.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'from all husk.']

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'that this touch is most substantial and that the Substance of God touches the substance of the soul.'

be written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.<sup>1</sup> This alone can be said of it with truth, that it savours of eternal life.<sup>2</sup> For, although in this life we may not have perfect fruition of it, as in glory, yet nevertheless this touch, being of God, savours of eternal life. And in this way the soul in such a state tastes of all the things of God,<sup>3</sup> and there are communicated to it fortitude, wisdom, love, beauty, grace and goodness, and so forth. For as God is all these things, the soul tastes them in one single touch of God, and thus the soul has fruition of Him according to its faculties and its substance.

20. And of this good which comes to the soul a part sometimes overflows into the body through the union of the spirit, and this is enjoyed by all the substance of sense and all the members of the body and the very marrow and bones, not as feebly as is usually the case, but with a feeling of great delight and glory, which is felt even in the remotest joints of the feet and hands. And the body feels such glory in the glory of the soul that it magnifies God after its own manner, perceiving that He is in its very bones,<sup>4</sup> even as David said: 'All my bones shall say, "God, who is like to Thee?"'<sup>5</sup> And since all that can be said concerning this matter is less than the truth, it suffices to say of the bodily experience, as of the spiritual, that it savours of eternal life.<sup>6</sup>

### And pays every debt!

21. Here it behoves us to explain what debts are these which the soul now recognizes as paid. It must be known that the souls which attain to this lofty kingdom have commonly passed through many trials and tribulations, since it behoves us to enter through many tribulations into the kingdom of the heavens;<sup>7</sup> which things have in this state already passed, for henceforth there is no more suffering.<sup>8</sup> That which has to be suffered by those who are about to attain to union with God is trials and temptations of many kinds in sense, and trials and tribulations and temptations and darknesses and perils in the spirit, so that both these parts may be purged together, as we said in

<sup>1</sup> Apocalypse ii, 17.

<sup>2</sup> A omits the rest of this paragraph and all of the paragraph following except the last sentence.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'tastes in a wondrous manner, and by participation, of all the things of God.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'in one single touch of God, in a certain eminent way. And of this good which comes to the soul some of the unction of the spirit sometimes overflows into the body, and it seems to penetrate to its very bones.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm xxxiv, 10 [A.V., xxxv, 10].

<sup>6</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'it suffices to say that it savours of eternal life.'

<sup>7</sup> Acts xiv, 21 [A.V., xiv, 22].

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'for . . . suffering.'

the exposition of the fourth line of the first stanza.<sup>1</sup> And the reason for these trials is that the delight and knowledge of God cannot well find a home in the soul if sense and spirit be not thoroughly purged and toughened and purified. And thus, since trials and penances purify and refine the soul and tribulations and temptations and darknesses and perils refine and prepare the spirit, it behoves the soul to pass through them to attain to transformation in God, even as those beyond the grave must do, by going through purgatory, some with greater intensity and others with less, some spending more time therein and others less, according to the degrees of union to which God is pleased to raise them and the degree of purgation which they have to undergo.

22. By means of these trials whereinto God leads the soul and the senses, the soul gradually acquires virtues and strength and perfection, together with bitterness, for virtue is made perfect in weakness,<sup>2</sup> and is wrought by the experience of sufferings. For iron cannot be subservient to the intelligence<sup>3</sup> of the artificer, unless he use fire and a hammer, which do harm to the iron if it be compared with what it was in its former state. Even so Jeremias says that God taught him, saying: 'He sent fire into my bones and taught me.'<sup>4</sup> And he likewise says of the hammer: 'Thou hast chastised me, Lord, and I was instructed and became wise.'<sup>5</sup> Even so the Preacher says: 'He that is not tried, what does he know and whereof has he knowledge?'<sup>6</sup>

23. And here it behoves us to note why it is that there are so few that attain to this lofty state. It must be known that this is not because God is pleased that there should be few raised to this high spiritual state—on the contrary, it would please Him if all were so raised—but rather because He finds few vessels in whom He can perform so high and lofty a work. For, when He proves them in small things and finds them weak and sees that they at once flee<sup>7</sup> from labour, and desire not to submit to the least discomfort or mortification, or to work with solid patience, He finds that they are not strong enough to bear the favour which He was granting them when He began to purge them,<sup>8</sup> and goes no farther with their purification, neither does He lift them up

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'as we said in the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and in the *Dark Night*.'

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 9.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'to the plan.'

<sup>4</sup> Lamentations i, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Jeremias xxxi, 18.

<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiasticus xxxiv, 9. [The two verbs have different senses in the original. We might bring out this difference by paraphrasing: 'what wisdom has he and what thing can he recognize?']

<sup>7</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'to this lofty state. The reason is that in this lofty and sublime work which God begins there are many weak souls; as these at once flee.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'began to carve (or 'form') them.'

from the dust of the earth, since for this they would need greater fortitude and constancy. To these, then, who would fain make progress, yet cannot suffer the smallest things nor submit themselves to them, can be made the reply which we find in Jeremias in these words: 'If thou hast run with those who went on foot and hast laboured, how canst thou contend with horses? And as thou hast had quietness in the land of peace, how wilt thou do in the pride of Jordan?'<sup>1</sup> This is as though he were to say: If in the trials which commonly and ordinarily afflict all those who live this human life thy pace was so slow that thou didst run and countedst all as labour, how wilt thou be able to keep pace with the step of a horse—that is to say, to leave these ordinary and common trials and pass from them to others of greater strength and swiftness? And if thou hast been loth to make war against the peace and pleasure of this land of thine, which is thy sensual nature, but seekest to be quiet and to have comfort therein, what wilt thou do in the pride of Jordan? That is, how wilt thou suffer the impetuous waters of spiritual tribulation and trial, which are more interior?

24.<sup>2</sup> Oh, souls that seek to walk in security and comfort! If ye did but know how necessary it is to suffer and endure in order to reach this lofty state, and of what great benefit it is to suffer and be mortified in order to reach such lofty blessings, ye would in no way seek consolation, either from God or from the creatures,<sup>3</sup> but would rather bear the cross, together with pure vinegar and gall, and would count this a great happiness, for, being thus dead to the world and to your own selves, ye would live to God in the delights of the spirit; and, bearing outward things with patience, ye would become worthy for God to set His eyes upon you to cleanse and purge you more inwardly by means of more interior spiritual trials.<sup>4</sup> For they to whom God is to grant so notable a favour<sup>5</sup> as to tempt them more interiorly must have rendered Him many services, and have had much patience and constancy for His sake, and be very acceptable in their lives in His sight. This we read of the holy man Tobias, to whom Raphael said that, because he had been acceptable to God, He had granted him this favour of sending him a temptation that should prove him more in order that he might give him more.<sup>6</sup> And even so, says the Scripture,

<sup>1</sup> Jeremias xii, 5.

<sup>2</sup> A omits this and the two following paragraphs.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'seek consolation in aught.'

<sup>4</sup> Gr: 'more inward spiritual trials, in order to give you more inward blessings.' B: 'more inward spiritual trials.' C: 'inward spiritual trials, in order to give you inward blessings.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'such a favour.'

<sup>6</sup> Tobias xii, 13. E.p. begins the sentence: 'And thus the angel spake to the holy man Tobias, saying that, etc.'

all that remained to him of life, after that time, caused him joy. In the same way we read of Job that, when God accepted him as His servant, as He did in the presence of the good and the evil spirits, He then granted him the favour of sending him those heavy trials, that He might afterwards exalt him, as indeed He did, both in spiritual and in temporal things, and much more so than before.<sup>1</sup>

25. Even so acts God to those whom He desires to exalt with the chiefest exaltation; He causes them to be tempted to the highest degree possible, that He may also deify them to the highest degree possible, by granting them union<sup>2</sup> in His wisdom, which is the highest state, and purging them first of all in this wisdom to the highest possible degree, even as David observes, where he says: 'The wisdom of the Lord is silver tried by the fire, proved in the earth of our flesh and purged seven times,'<sup>3</sup> which is the greatest purgation possible.<sup>4</sup> And there is no reason to tarry here any longer in order to show how each of the seven purgations leads us to this communion with God,<sup>5</sup> which here below is like silver, for, however high it be, it is not yet as gold.<sup>6</sup>

26. But it greatly behoves the soul to have much constancy and patience in these tribulations and trials, whether they come from without or from within, and are spiritual or corporeal, greater or lesser. It must take them all as from the hand of God for its healing and its good, and not flee from them, since they are health to the soul. This the Wise Man counsels, in these words: 'If the spirit of him that is powerful descend upon thee, leave not thy place' (that is, the place and abode of thy healing, by which is meant that trial); for the healing, he says, will cause great sins to cease.<sup>7</sup> That is, it will cut the thread of thy sins and imperfections, which is evil habit, that they go not farther. And thus interior perils and trials quench and purify the evil and imperfect habits of the soul. Wherefore we must count it a great favour when the Lord sends us interior trials, realizing that there are few who deserve to suffer that they may reach the goal of this lofty state of attainment to perfection through suffering.

27. As the soul now remembers that it has been very well recom-

<sup>1</sup> [Job i, 8; xlii, 12.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'to exalt with the chiefest betterment, allowing them to be tempted, afflicted, tormented and purified, interiorly and exteriorly, as far as is possible, that He may deify them, by granting them union.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xi, 7 [A.V., xii, 6].

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'seven times—that is, greatly purged.'

<sup>5</sup> [P. Silverio reads *eloquio*, an archaic word meaning literally 'speech.'] C has: 'this colloquy of God'; G: 'this union with God'; e.p.: 'this Divine wisdom.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'as precious gold, which is kept for [the life of] glory.'

<sup>7</sup> Ecclesiastes x, 4.

pensed for all its past trials, since now *sicut tenebræ ejus, ita et lumen ejus*,<sup>1</sup> and, as the soul aforetime shared in tribulations, it now shares in consolations; and as all its trials, within and without, have been amply rewarded by Divine blessings of soul and body,<sup>2</sup> there is none of its trials that has not a correspondingly great reward. And thus the soul confesses that it is now well satisfied, when it says in this line: 'And pays every debt.' Even so David said in his own case, in these words: 'Many and grievous are the tribulations that Thou hast shown me, and Thou didst deliver me from them all, and from the depths of the earth hast Thou brought me out again; Thou hast multiplied Thy magnificence, and, turning to me, hast comforted me.'<sup>3</sup> And thus this soul that aforetime was without, at the gates of the palace (like Mardochai weeping in the streets of Susan, because his life was in peril, and clothed in sackcloth, refusing to receive the garments from Queen Esther, and having received no favour or reward for the services that he had rendered the King, and his faithfulness in serving the honour and life of the King),<sup>4</sup> is recompensed in a single day for all its trials and services, for not only is it made to enter the palace and stand before the King, clad in regal vesture, but likewise it is crowned, and given a sceptre, and a royal seat, and possession of the King's ring, so that it may do all that it desires, and need do naught that it desires not to do in the kingdom of its Spouse;<sup>5</sup> for those that are in this state receive all that they desire. It is well recompensed indeed for the whole debt, since its enemies are now dead—namely, the desires that were going about seeking to take away its life—and it now lives in God. For this cause the soul next says:

**In slaying, thou hast changed death into life.**

28. Death is naught else than privation of life, for, when life comes, there remains no trace of death. With respect to the spirit, there are two kinds of life; one is beatific, which consists in seeing God,<sup>6</sup> and this will be attained by means of<sup>7</sup> the natural death of the body, as Saint Paul says in these words: 'We know that if this our house of clay be dissolved, we have a dwelling of God in the heavens.'<sup>8</sup> The other is perfect spiritual life, which is the possession of God through the

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxxxviii, 12 [A.V., cxxxix, 12].

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'of soul and body.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxx, 20 [A.V., lxxi, 20-1].

<sup>4</sup> Esther iv, 1-4.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'but likewise a diadem is placed on its head and it is as another Esther in the possession of the kingdom, so that it may do all that it desires in the kingdom of its Spouse.'

<sup>6</sup> G adds: 'face to face.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'and this must be preceded by.'

<sup>8</sup> 2 Corinthians v, 1.

union of love, and this is attained through the complete mortification of all vices and desires and of the soul's entire nature.<sup>1</sup> And until this be done, the soul cannot attain to the perfection of this spiritual life of union with God, even as the Apostle says likewise in these words: 'If you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.'<sup>2</sup>

29. It must be known, then, that that which the soul here calls death is all that is meant by the 'old man', namely, the employment of the faculties—memory, understanding and will—and the use and occupation of them in things of the world, and the occupation of the desires in the pleasure afforded by created things. All this is the exercise of the old life, which is the death of the new, or spiritual, life. Herein the soul will be unable to live perfectly if it die not perfectly likewise to the old man, as the Apostle warns us when he says that we should put off the old man, and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness.<sup>3</sup> In this new life, when the soul has reached the perfection of union with God, as we are saying here, all the desires of the soul, and its faculties and their operations, which of themselves were the operations of death and the privation of spiritual life, are changed into Divine operations.<sup>4</sup>

30. And as each living creature lives by its operation, as the philosophers say, having its operations in God, through the union that they have with God, the soul lives the life of God and its death has been changed into life.<sup>5</sup> For the understanding, which before this union understood in a natural way<sup>6</sup> with the strength and vigour of its natural light, is now moved and informed by another principle, that of the supernatural light of God, and has been changed into the Divine, for its understanding and that of God are now both one. And the will, which aforetime loved after the manner of death, that is to say, meanly and with its natural affection, has now<sup>7</sup> been changed into the life of Divine love; for it loves after a lofty manner with Divine affection and is moved by the Holy Spirit in Whom it now lives, since its will and His will are now only one.<sup>8</sup> And the memory, which of itself perceived

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'and of the soul's entire nature.'

<sup>2</sup> Romans viii, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians iv, 22-4.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'all the affections of the soul, its faculties and operations, of themselves imperfect and mean, become Divine.'

<sup>5</sup> A omits almost all the rest of the commentary on this line.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'understood inadequately [*cortamente*].'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'by another principle and a higher light of God. And the will, which aforetime loved lukewarmly, has now, etc.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p. omits: 'since . . . only one.'

only the forms and figures of created things, has become changed, so that it has in its mind the eternal years. And the desire, which enjoyed only creature food that wrought death, is now changed so that it tastes and enjoys Divine food, being now moved by another and a more living principle, which is the delight of God; so that it is now the desire of God.<sup>1</sup> And finally, all the movements and operations which the soul had aforetime, and which belonged to the principle of its natural life, are now in this union changed into movements of God. For the soul, like the true daughter of God that it now is, is moved wholly by the Spirit of God, even as Saint Paul says: 'That they that are moved by the Spirit of God are sons of God.'<sup>2</sup> So the understanding of the soul is now the understanding of God; and its will is the will of God; and its memory is the memory of God; and its delight is the delight of God;<sup>3</sup> and the substance of the soul, although it is not the Substance of God, for into this it cannot be changed, is nevertheless united in Him and absorbed in Him, and is thus God by participation in God, which comes to pass in this perfect state of the spiritual life, although not so perfectly as in the next life. And in this way<sup>4</sup> by 'slaying, thou hast changed death into life.' And for this reason the soul may here say very truly with Saint Paul: 'I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.'<sup>5</sup> And thus the death<sup>6</sup> of this soul is changed into the life of God, and the soul becomes absorbed in life, since within it there is likewise fulfilled the saying of the Apostle: 'Death is absorbed in victory.'<sup>7</sup> And likewise the words of Osee, the prophet, who says: 'O death, I will be thy death, saith God.'<sup>8</sup>

31. In this way the soul is absorbed in life, being withdrawn from all that is secular and temporal and freed from that which belongs to its own unruly nature, so that it is brought into the cellars of the King,<sup>9</sup> where it rejoices and is glad in its Beloved, and remembers His breasts more than wine, saying: 'I am black but beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem';<sup>10</sup> for my natural blackness is changed into the beauty of the heavenly King. Wherefore, oh burning of the fire that infinitely burnest above all fires else, the more thou burnest me the sweeter art thou to

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'And the desire, which aforetime was inclined to the food of the creatures, now tastes and enjoys Divine food, being now moved by another and a more living principle, which is the sweetness of God.'

<sup>2</sup> Romans viii, 14.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'So the understanding . . . delight of God.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds: 'he well says.'

<sup>5</sup> Galatians ii, 20.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'the death and coldness.'

<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians xv, 54.

<sup>8</sup> Osee xiii, 14.

<sup>9</sup> C: 'into the streets of the King.' G: 'into the royal chamber.'

<sup>10</sup> Canticles i, 4.

me! And oh, delectable wound, thou art to me most delectable health, more so than all other health and delights of the world! And oh, soft hand, that art infinitely soft above all softness,<sup>1</sup> the more thou art laid upon me and dost press upon me, the softer to me art thou! And oh, delicate touch, whose delicateness is more subtle and more curious than all the subtle beauties of the creatures, surpassing them infinitely, and sweeter and more delicious than honey and the honeycomb, since thou savourest of eternal life, the more intimately<sup>2</sup> thou dost touch me the greater is the delight that thou givest me; and infinitely more precious art thou than gold and precious stones, since thou payest debts which naught else could pay, turning death into life in a way most marvellous.

32. In this state of life, perfect as it is, the soul is, as it were, keeping festival, and has in its mouth<sup>3</sup> a great song of joy to God, and, as it were, a song new and ever new, turned into joy<sup>4</sup> and love, and having knowledge of its lofty state. At times it rejoices, saying within its spirit those words of Job, namely: 'My glory shall always be renewed and as a palm tree shall I multiply my days.'<sup>5</sup> Which is as much as to say: God Who, remaining within Himself unchangeably, makes all things new, as the Wise Man says, being united for ever in my glory, will make my glory ever new, that is to say, He will not suffer it to grow old as it was before; and I shall multiply my days—that is, my merits—unto Heaven, even as the palm tree multiplies its branches. And all that David says in the twenty-ninth Psalm the soul sings inwardly to God, particularly those last lines which say: 'Thou hast turned for me my mourning into joy, Thou hast cut my sackcloth, and hast compassed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing to Thee, and may not be ashamed (for here no pain reaches the soul). O Lord my God, I will praise Thee for ever.'<sup>6</sup> For the soul now feels God to be so solicitous in granting it favours and to be magnifying it with such precious and delicate and endearing words, and granting it favour upon favour, that it believes that there is no other soul in the world whom He thus favours, nor aught else wherewith He occupies Himself, but that He is wholly for itself alone. And, when it feels this, it confesses its feeling in the words of the Songs: 'My Beloved to me and I to Him.'<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G: 'above all soft hands.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'palate.']

<sup>5</sup> [Job xxix, 18, 20.]

<sup>7</sup> Canticles ii, 16. E.p.: 'And it makes this confession in the Songs: "I wholly to my Beloved and my Beloved wholly to me."'

<sup>2</sup> G. T: 'infinitely.'

<sup>4</sup> C: 'into grace.'

<sup>6</sup> Psalm xxix, 12-13 [A.V., xxx, 11-12].

## STANZA III

**Oh, lamps of fire, In whose splendours the deep caverns of sense  
 which were dark and blind  
 With strange brightness Give heat and light together to their  
 Beloved!**

## EXPOSITION

**M**AY God be pleased to grant me His favour here, for in truth it is very needful if I am to explain<sup>1</sup> the profound meaning of this stanza; great attention, too, is necessary in him that reads it, for, if he have no experience of this, it will perhaps be somewhat obscure to him, though, if perchance he should have had such experience, it will be clear and pleasing.<sup>2</sup> In this stanza, the soul gives deepest thanks to its Spouse for the great favours which it receives<sup>3</sup> from union with Him, for by means of this union He has given it great and abundant knowledge<sup>4</sup> of Himself, wherewith the faculties and senses of the soul, which before this union were dark and blinded by other kinds of love,<sup>5</sup> have been enlightened and enkindled with love, and can now be illumined, as indeed they are, and through the heat of love can give light and love<sup>6</sup> to Him Who enkindled and enamoured them and infused into them such Divine gifts. For the true lover is content only when all that he is, and all that he is worth and can be worth, and all that he has and can have, are employed in the Beloved; and the more of this there is, the greater is the pleasure that he receives in giving it. In the first place, it must be known that lamps have two properties, which are to give light and to burn. There follows the line:

**Oh, lamps of fire,**

2. In order to understand this line, it must be known that God, in His one and simple Being, is all the virtues and grandeurs of His attributes;<sup>7</sup> for He is omnipotent, wise, good, merciful, just, strong

<sup>1</sup> E.p. begins: 'Great is the need here of the favour of God in order that I may explain.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'if he have no experience of this, that which is here treated will be very obscure, though, if perchance he should have had such experience, it will be clear and pleasing.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'which it has received.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'by means of this union abundant and most sublime knowledge.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'were dark and blind.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'and are illumined with the heat of love, in order that they may respond by offering that same light and love.'

<sup>7</sup> G.: 'in His one and most simple Being, contains all the perfections and grandeurs of His attributes.'

and loving, and has other infinite<sup>1</sup> attributes and virtues whereof we have no knowledge here below; and, as He is all these things when He is united with the soul, at the time when He is pleased to reveal knowledge to it, it is able to see in Him all these virtues and grandeurs, clearly and distinctly—namely, omnipotence, goodness, wisdom, justice, mercy and so forth, all in one simple Being. And, as each of these things is the very Being of God in one sole reality, which is the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit, each attribute being God Himself and God being infinite light and infinite Divine fire, as we have said above, it follows from this that in each of these attributes, which, as we say, are innumerable, and are His virtues, He gives light and burns as God.<sup>2</sup>

3. And thus according to these kinds of knowledge of God which the soul here possesses, actually distinct in one single act, God Himself is to the soul as many lamps, which give light to it each in a distinct way, for from each lamp<sup>3</sup> the soul has knowledge and by each is given the heat of love, in its own way and all in one simple being, as we say; and all these are one lamp,<sup>4</sup> which is the Word, which, as Saint Paul says, is the brightness of the glory of the Father. This lamp<sup>5</sup> is all these lamps, since it gives light and burns in all these ways; and this the soul is able to see—namely, that this one lamp is many lamps to it. For, as it is one, it can do all things, and has all virtues, and comprehends all spirits,<sup>6</sup> and thus in one act it gives light and burns according to all its grandeurs and virtues—in many ways, we may say, yet in one way.<sup>7</sup> For it gives light and burns as being omnipotent, and gives light and burns as being wise, and gives light and burns as being good, and gives light and burns as being strong, as being just, as being true, and as having each of the other Divine virtues and qualities which are in God, giving the soul intelligence and love concerning Him, both according to all these virtues distinctly and also according to each one. For when He communicates Himself, since He is all of them and each one of them, He gives the soul light and love Divine according to them all, and according to each one of them; for, wheresoever the fire is

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'infinite.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'which . . . His virtues' and reads: 'as Very God.'

<sup>3</sup> G: 'And thus according to these distinct kinds of knowledge of God which the soul here possesses, knowing all these perfections with one sole act, God Himself comes to be to the soul as many lamps, etc.' E.p.: 'here possesses, in unity, God Himself is to the soul as many lamps, for from each lamp.'

<sup>4</sup> A, C, Gr: 'and all one being and all one lamp.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'and all these are one lamp, which lamp.'

<sup>6</sup> A omits the whole of what follows, down to the words 'well of living waters' in § 7.

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'and thus we may say that it gives light and burns in many ways, yet in one way.'

applied,<sup>1</sup> and whatever be the effect that it causes, it gives its heat and brightness; since this always happens in one manner.<sup>2</sup> For the brightness that this light gives inasmuch as it is omnipotence produces in the soul light and heat of the love of God inasmuch as He is omnipotent, and therefore God is now to the soul a lamp of omnipotence which gives it light and burns in it according to this attribute. And the brightness which this lamp gives inasmuch as it is wisdom produces the heat of the love of God in the soul inasmuch as He is wise and according to this God is to the soul a lamp of wisdom. And the brightness which this lamp of God gives inasmuch as it is goodness produces the heat of the love of God in the soul inasmuch as He is good, and accordingly God is then to the soul a lamp of goodness. In the same way He is a lamp of justice to it, and of fortitude, and of mercy, for the light<sup>3</sup> that He gives to the soul from each of these attributes and from all the rest produces in the soul the heat of the love of God inasmuch as He is such. And thus in this lofty communication and manifestation (which, as I think, is the greatest that can come to the soul in this life), God is to the soul as innumerable lamps which give it light and love.<sup>4</sup>

4. These lamps gave light to Moses<sup>5</sup> on Mount Sinai, where God passed before him and he quickly fell prostrate on the ground, and proclaimed some of the grandeurs which he saw in God; and, loving Him according to those things which he had seen, he proclaimed them each separately, saying: 'Emperor, Lord, God that art merciful, clement, patient, of much compassion, true, that keepest mercy for thousands, that takest away sins and evil deeds and faults, and art so righteous that there is no man who of himself is innocent before Thee.'<sup>6</sup> Herein it is clear that the majority of the attributes and virtues of God which Moses then learned and loved were those of God's omnipotence, dominion, deity, mercy, justice, truth and uprightness; which was a most profound knowledge and a most sublime delight of love.

5. From this it follows that the delight and rapture of love which the soul receives in the fire of the light of these lamps is wondrous, boundless and as vast as that of many lamps, each of which burns with love,

<sup>1</sup> G omits the rest of the paragraph except the final sentence and has many minor variations and omissions throughout the remainder of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'giving the soul intelligence and love, and revealing itself to it, in a manner corresponding to its capacity, according to them all.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'inasmuch as He is wise, and so of the remaining attributes, for the light.'

<sup>4</sup> G: 'as innumerable lamps which enkindle it and illumine it in love of God Himself so that it knows Him and loves Him most ardently according to all His attributes.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'gave light well to Moses.'] E.p.: 'allowed Moses to see Him.'

<sup>6</sup> Exodus xxxiv, 6-7.

the heat of one being added to the heat of another, and the flame of one to the flame of another, as the light of one gives light to another, and all of them become one light and fire, and each of them becomes one fire. The soul is completely absorbed in these delicate flames, and wounded subtly in each of them, and in all of them more deeply and subtly wounded in love of life, so that it can see quite clearly that that love belongs to life eternal, which is the union of all blessings. So that the soul in that state knows well the truth of those words of the Spouse in the Songs, where He says that the lamps of love were lamps of fire and flames. Beauteous art thou in thy footsteps and thy shoes, oh, prince's daughter! Who can recount the magnificence and rarity of thy delight in the love of thy lamps and thy wondrous splendour?<sup>1</sup> For if one single lamp of those that passed before Abraham caused him great and darksome<sup>2</sup> horror, when God passed by, giving him knowledge of the rigorous justice which He was about to work upon the Chanaanites,<sup>3</sup> shall not all these lamps of the knowledge of God which give thee a pleasant<sup>4</sup> and loving light cause thee more light and joy of love than that single lamp caused horror and darkness in Abraham? And how great and how excellent and how manifold shall be thy light and joy, since in it all and from it all thou perceivest that He is giving thee His fruition and love, loving thee according to His virtues and attributes and qualities!

6. For he that loves another and does him good loves him and does him good according to his own attributes and properties. And thus since thy Spouse, Who is within thee, is omnipotent, He gives thee omnipotence and loves thee therewith; and since He is wise, thou perceivest that He loves thee with wisdom; since He is good, thou perceivest that He loves thee with goodness; since He is holy, thou perceivest that He loves thee with holiness; since He is just, thou perceivest that He loves thee justly; since He is merciful, thou perceivest that He loves thee with mercy; since He is compassionate and clement, thou perceivest that He loves thee with meekness and clemency; since His Being is strong and sublime and delicate, thou perceivest that He loves thee with strength, sublimity and delicacy; and since He is clean and pure, thou perceivest that He loves thee with cleanness and purity; and since He is true, thou perceivest that He loves thee truly; and since He is liberal, thou perceivest likewise that He

<sup>1</sup> Canticles vii, 1. E.p. omits: 'Beauteous . . . splendour.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits 'and darksome.'

<sup>3</sup> [Genesis xv, 12-17.]

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'a friendly.']

loves thee with liberality, without self-interest, and only that He may do thee good; as He is the virtue of the greatest humility, He loves thee with the greatest humility, and with the greatest esteem, making Himself thine equal and making thee His equal, joyfully revealing to thee, in these ways, His countenance, full of graces,<sup>1</sup> and saying to thee: I am thine and for thee, and I delight to be such as I am that I may give Myself to thee and be thine.

7. Who, then, can describe that which thou perceivest, oh, blessed soul, when thou seest thyself to be thus loved and to be exalted with such esteem? Thy belly, which is thy will, we shall describe as the heap of wheat which is covered and set about with lilies.<sup>2</sup> For in these grains of the wheat of the bread of life<sup>3</sup> which thou art tasting all together, the lilies of the virtues that surround thee are giving thee delight. For these daughters of the King, which are these virtues, are delighting thee wondrously with the fragrance of their aromatic spices, which are the knowledge that He gives thee; and thou art so wholly engulfed and absorbed therein that thou art also the well of living waters that run with vehemence from Mount Libanus, which is God,<sup>4</sup> in the which stream thou art become marvellously glad with all the harmony of thy soul and even of thy body. Thus may the words of the Psalm be accomplished in thee, namely: 'The vehemence of the river makes glad the city of God.'<sup>5</sup>

8. Oh, wondrous thing! At this time the soul is overflowing with Divine waters, which flow from it as from an abundant source,<sup>6</sup> whose waters gush in all directions. For, although it is true that this communication is light and fire from these lamps of God, yet this fire, as we have said, is here so sweet that, vast as it is, it is like the waters of life which quench the thirst of the spirit with the vehemence that it desires.<sup>7</sup> Thus, though these are lamps of fire, they are living waters of the spirit, even as were those that came upon the Apostles, which, though they were lamps of fire,<sup>8</sup> were also pure and clear water, as the prophet Ezechiel called them when he prophesied that coming of the Holy Spirit, saying: 'I will pour out upon you, saith God, clean water,

<sup>1</sup> E.p., B abbreviate: 'that He loves thee with holiness, and so forth; and since He is liberal, thou perceivest likewise that He loves thee with liberality, without self-interest, and only that He may do thee good, joyfully revealing to thee this His countenance, full of graces.'

<sup>2</sup> Canticles vii, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Canticles iv, 15.

<sup>6</sup> E.p. adds: 'that looks upon eternal life.'

<sup>7</sup> [Cf. here a poem attributed to St. John of the Cross, referred to in Vol. II, p. 413.]

<sup>8</sup> C: 'were tongues of fire.'

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'grains of bread of life.']

<sup>5</sup> Psalm xlv, 5 [A.V., xlv, 4].

and will put My spirit in the midst of you.<sup>1</sup> And thus this fire is likewise water, since it is prefigured in the fire that Jeremias hid, which belonged to the sacrifice, which was water when it was hidden and fire when it was brought forth and used for the sacrifice.<sup>2</sup> And thus this spirit of God, while hidden in the veins of the soul, is like sweet and delectable water quenching the thirst of the spirit in the substance of the soul;<sup>3</sup> and, when the soul offers the sacrifice of love, it becomes living flames of fire,<sup>4</sup> which are the lamps of the act of love described, as we said, by the Spouse in the Songs, in these words: 'The lamps thereof are lamps of fire and of flames';<sup>5</sup> which the soul calls them here also. For not only does the soul taste them as waters of wisdom within itself, but likewise as fire of love, in an act of love, saying: 'Oh, lamps of fire.' And all that can be said of this matter is less than what there is to be said. If we consider that the soul is transformed in God, it will be understood in some wise how it is true that it has become a fountain of living waters, boiling and burning in the fire of love, which is God.

### In whose splendours

9. It has already been explained that these splendours are the communications of these Divine lamps, wherein the soul that is in union shines forth in splendour with its faculties—memory, understanding and will—which are now illumined and united in this loving knowledge. It must be understood that this enlightenment of splendour is not like a material fire which, with its bursts of flame, enlightens and heats things that are outside it, but is like one that heats things that<sup>6</sup> are within it, as is the soul in this state. For this reason the soul says: 'In whose splendours': that is to say, it is 'within'—not 'near' but 'within'—its splendours, in the flames of the lamps, the soul being transformed into flame. And so we shall say that it is like the air which is within the flame and is enkindled and transformed into fire, for flame is naught else but enkindled air; and the movements made by this flame are not simply those of air nor simply those of fire, but of air and fire together, and the fire causes the air that is enkindled within it to burn.

10. And in this way we shall understand that the soul with its faculties is illumined within the splendours of God. And the movements of

<sup>1</sup> Ezechiel xxxvi, 25-6.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Machabees i, 20-2. [The reference in this passage is to Nehemias. No doubt there is a scribal error here: a change of only two letters is involved.]

<sup>3</sup> E.p. omits: 'in the substance of the soul.'

<sup>4</sup> C: 'of fire of love.'

<sup>5</sup> [Canticles viii, 6.]

<sup>6</sup> So e.p. The other authorities [followed by P. Silverio] read: 'but is like those that.'

this flame, which are the flickerings and the flamings forth that we have described above, are not wrought only by the soul that is transformed in the flame of the Holy Spirit, neither are they wrought by Him alone; but by Him and by the soul together, the Spirit moving the soul, even as fire moves air that is enkindled. And thus these movements of God and the soul together are not only splendours, but also glorifications<sup>1</sup> which God works in the soul. For these movements or flickerings<sup>2</sup> are the fires<sup>3</sup> and the joyful festivals which we said, in the second line of the first stanza, the Holy Spirit brings to pass within the soul, wherein it seems that He is ever about to grant it eternal life. And thus those movements and bursts of flame are, as it were, provocations that the Spirit is causing the soul so that He may in the end remove it to His perfect glory and make it at last to enter truly within Himself. For all the blessings, both the early and the late, the great and the small, that God grants the soul He grants to it always with this motive, which pertains both to Him and to the soul, of bringing it to eternal life.<sup>4</sup> Just so is it when fire makes movements and motions in the enkindled air which it has within itself; the purpose of these is to bring it to the centre<sup>5</sup> of its sphere; and all these flickerings are attempts to bring it there, but, because the air is in its own sphere, this cannot be done. In the same way, although these movements of the Holy Spirit are most highly enkindled and are most effective in absorbing the soul into great glory, yet this is not accomplished perfectly until the time comes for the soul to leave the sphere of air—which is this life of the flesh—and to enter into the centre of its spirit, which is perfect life in Christ.

II. But it must be understood that these movements are movements of the soul rather than of God; for these glimpses of glory in God that are given to the soul are not stable, perfect and continuous, as they will be in the soul hereafter, without any change<sup>6</sup> between greater and lesser, and without any intervening movements; and then the soul will see clearly how, although here below it appeared that God was moving in it, God moves not in Himself, even as the fire moves not in its sphere. But these splendours are inestimable graces and favours

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: '... together are as it were glorifications.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'movements and bursts of flame or flickerings.'

<sup>3</sup> A, C: 'the playing(s)'—i.e. of the fire: the general sense is the same as in the text. [The reading of the text, however, does not agree so well with the following substantive.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits the whole of this sentence.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'to the summit.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. abbreviates (from the beginning of the paragraph) thus: 'These glimpses of glory in God that are here given to the soul are now more continuous than they used to be, and more perfect and stable; but in the next life they will be most perfect, without change.'

that God grants to the soul, which by another name are called overshadowings, and these, in my opinion, are among the highest favours that can be granted here on earth in this process of transformation.

12. To understand this it must be realized that 'overshadowing' means the casting of a shadow, and for a man to cast his shadow over another signifies that he protects him and grants him favours. When the shadow touches the person, this is a sign that he who overshadows him is now near to befriend and protect him. For this reason it was said to the Virgin, that the power of the Most High would overshadow her,<sup>1</sup> because the Holy Spirit was to approach her so nearly that He would come upon her. Herein it is to be noted that everything has and makes a shadow which corresponds to its nature and size. If the thing is dense and opaque, it will make a dark and dense shadow, and if it is clearer and lighter it will make a lighter shadow: this we see with a log of wood or with crystal; the one, being opaque, will make a dark shadow, and the other, being light, will make a light shadow.

13. Even so in spiritual matters. Death is the privation of all things. The shadow of death, then, will be darkness which in one sense deprives us of all things. This name was given to it by the Psalmist, where he said: *Sedentes in tenebris et in umbra mortis*;<sup>2</sup> whether the darkness be spiritual, and relate to spiritual death, or bodily, and relate to bodily death. The shadow of life will be light: if Divine, Divine light; if human, natural light. What, then, will be the shadow of beauty? It will be other beauty, of the nature and proportions of that beauty. So the shadow of strength will be other strength, of the nature and quality of that strength. And the shadow of wisdom will be other wisdom; or, more correctly, it will be the same beauty and the same strength and the same wisdom in shadow, wherein will be recognized the nature and proportions of which the shadow is cast.<sup>3</sup>

14. What, then, will be the shadows that the Holy Spirit will cast upon the soul—namely, the shadows of all the grandeurs of His virtues and attributes? For He is so near to the soul that they not only touch it in shadow, but the soul is united with them in shadow, and experiences them in shadow,<sup>4</sup> and it understands and experiences the nature and proportions of God in the shadow of God—that is, by

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke i, 35.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cvi, 10 [A.V., cvii, 10].

<sup>3</sup> E.p. continues (after the Latin quotation): 'and thus the shadow of beauty will be as other beauty, of the proportions and properties of that beauty of which it is the shadow; and the shadow of strength will be as other strength, of its proportions and qualities. And the shadow of wisdom, etc.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'and experiences them in shadow.'

understanding and experiencing the nature of Divine power in the shadow of omnipotence; and it understands and experiences Divine wisdom in the shadow of Divine wisdom; understands and experiences infinite goodness in the shadow of infinite goodness which surrounds it; understands and experiences the delight of God infused in the shadow of the delight of God; and, finally,<sup>1</sup> experiences the glory of God in the shadow of glory which causes it to know and experience the nature and proportions of the glory of God when all these pass by in bright and enkindled shadows. For the attributes of God and His virtues are lamps which, resplendent and enkindled as they are, will cast shadows that are resplendent and enkindled according to His nature and proportions, and will cast a multitude of them in one sole being.

15. Oh, what this will be for the soul, when it experiences the power of that figure which Ezechiel saw in that beast with four forms, and in that wheel with four wheels, when he saw that its appearance was as the appearance of kindled coals and as the appearance of lamps! The soul will see the wheel, which is wisdom, full of eyes within and without, which are wondrous manifestations of wisdom, and will hear the sound that they made as they passed, which was like the sound of a multitude and of great armies, signifying in one number many different things of God, which the soul<sup>2</sup> here understands<sup>3</sup> in one single sound of God's passing through it. Finally, it will experience that sound of the beating of wings, which Ezechiel says was as the sound of many waters and as the sound of the Most High God;<sup>4</sup> this indicates the vehemence of the Divine waters, which, at the beating of the wings of the Holy Spirit, overwhelm the soul and make it to rejoice in the flame of love,<sup>5</sup> so that it now enjoys the glory of God in His protection and the favour of His shadow, even as this prophet says in that place that that vision was the similitude of the glory of the Lord.<sup>6</sup> And to what a height may this happy soul now find itself raised! How greatly will it know itself to be exalted! How wondrous will it see itself to be in holy beauty! How far beyond all telling! For so copiously does it become immersed in the waters of these Divine splendours that it is able to see the Eternal Father with bounteous hand pouring

<sup>1</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'of Divine wisdom; and finally.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'which signifies many things in one, which the soul.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'here knows.'

<sup>4</sup> [Ezechiel i, 15-25.]

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'which, at the descent of the Holy Spirit, assails the soul in a flame of love.'

<sup>6</sup> [Ezechiel i, 28.]

forth the upper and the lower streams that water the earth,<sup>1</sup> even as the father of Axa gave these to her when she longed for them, for these irrigating waters penetrate both soul and body.<sup>2</sup>

16. Oh, wondrous thing, that all these lamps of the Divine attributes should be one simple being in which alone they are experienced, and yet that the distinction between them should be visible and perceptible,<sup>3</sup> the one being as completely enkindled as the other and the one being substantially the other! Oh, abyss of delights, the more abundant in proportion as thy riches are gathered together in infinite unity and simplicity, so that each one is known and experienced in such a way that the perfect knowledge and absorption of the other may not be impeded thereby, but rather each thing within thee is the light of the other, so that through thy purity, oh, Divine wisdom, many things are seen in thee when one thing is seen,<sup>4</sup> since thou art the store-house of the treasures of the Eternal Father. For in thy splendours are

### The deep caverns of sense

17. These caverns are the faculties of the soul—memory, understanding and will—of which the depth is proportionate to their capacity for great blessings, for they can be filled with nothing less than the infinite.<sup>5</sup> By considering what they suffer when they are empty we can realize in some measure the greatness of their joy and delight when they are filled with their God, for one contrary can give light to another.<sup>6</sup> In the first place, it must be noted that these caverns of the faculties, when they are not empty and purged and cleansed from all creature affection, are not conscious of their great emptiness, which is due to their profound capacity; for in this life any trifle that remains within them suffices to keep them so cumbered and fascinated that they are neither conscious of their loss nor do they miss the immense blessings that might be theirs, nor are they aware of their own capacity. And it is a wondrous thing that, despite their capacity for infinite

<sup>1</sup> [Judges i, 15. If we follow the Vulgate we shall read 'watery ground' for 'springs,' but the application is less apt.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'Oh, to what a height is this happy soul now raised! Oh, how is it exalted! How greatly does it wonder at what it sees, even within the limits of faith! Who shall be able to say this, since it is so completely immersed in the waters of these Divine splendours, where with bounteous hand the Eternal Father pours forth the upper and the lower streams that water the earth, for these irrigating waters penetrate both soul and body.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'one simple being, and yet in it the distinction between them is conceived and understood.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'is a light which hinders not the other, and through thy purity, oh, Divine wisdom, many things are known in thee in one.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'for they cannot be filled save with the infinite.'

<sup>6</sup> [Cf. p. 27, l. 1, above.]

blessing, the least thing suffices to cumber them, so that they cannot receive these blessings<sup>1</sup> until they are completely empty, as we shall say hereafter. But, when they are empty and clean, the hunger and thirst and yearning of their spiritual sense become intolerable; for, as the capacities<sup>2</sup> of these caverns are deep, their pain is deep likewise; as is also the food that they lack, which, as I say, is God. And this great feeling of pain commonly occurs towards the close of the illumination and purification of the soul, ere it attain to union,<sup>3</sup> wherein it has satisfaction. For, when the spiritual appetite is empty and purged from every creature and from every creature affection, and its natural temper is lost, and it has become attempered to the Divine, and its emptiness is disposed to be filled, and the Divine communication of union with God has not yet reached it, then the suffering caused by this emptiness and thirst is worse than death, especially when the soul is vouchsafed some foresight or glimpse of the Divine ray and this is not communicated to it. It is souls in this condition that suffer with impatient love, so that they cannot remain long without either receiving or dying.<sup>4</sup>

18. With respect to the first cavern which we here describe—namely, the understanding—its emptiness is thirst for God, and this is so great that David compares it to that of the hart, finding no greater thirst wherewith to compare it, for the thirst of the hart is said to be most vehement. Even as the hart<sup>5</sup> (says David) desires the fountains of the waters, even so does my soul desire Thee, O God.<sup>6</sup> This thirst is for the waters of the wisdom of God which is the object of the understanding.

19. The second cavern is the will, and the emptiness thereof is hunger for God, so great that it causes the soul to swoon, even as David says, in these words: 'My soul desires and faints in the tabernacles of the Lord.'<sup>7</sup> And this hunger is for the perfection of love to which the soul aspires.

20. The third cavern is the memory, whereof the emptiness is the melting away and languishing of the soul for the possession of God, as Jeremias notes in these words: *Memoria memor ero et tabescet in me anima mea.*<sup>8</sup> That is: With remembrance I shall remember. *Id est:*

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'perfectly.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the stomachs.']

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'to perfect union.'

<sup>4</sup> A omits all the rest of the commentary on this stanza, except §§ 59, 60.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'wherewith to compare it, when he says: Even as the hart, etc.'

<sup>6</sup> Psalm xli, 1 [A.V., xlii, 1].

<sup>7</sup> Psalm lxxxiii, 3 [A.V., lxxxiv, 2].

<sup>8</sup> Lamentations iii, 20-1. E.p. omits the Latin text.

I shall remember well and my soul shall melt away within me; turning over these things in my heart, I shall live in hope of God.

21. The capacity of these caverns, then, is deep; for that which they are capable of containing, which is God, is deep and infinite; and thus in a certain sense their capacity will be infinite, and likewise their thirst will be infinite, and their hunger also will be deep and infinite, and their languishing and pain are infinite death. For, although the soul suffers not so intensely as in the next life, it suffers nevertheless a vivid image of that infinite privation, since it is to a certain extent prepared to receive fullness; although this suffering is of another kind, for it dwells in the bosom of the love of the will, and this love does not alleviate the pain;<sup>1</sup> for the greater it is, the greater is the impatience of the soul for the possession of its God, for Whom it hopes continually with intense desire.

22. But, seeing it is certain that, when the soul desires God with entire truth, it already (as Saint Gregory says in writing of Saint John<sup>2</sup>) possesses Him Whom it loves, how comes it, O God, that it yearns for Him Whom it already possesses? For, in the desire which, as Saint Peter says,<sup>3</sup> the angels have to see the Son of God, there is neither pain nor yearning, since they possess Him already; so it seems that, if the soul possesses God more completely according as it desires Him more earnestly, the possession of God should give delight and satisfaction to the soul. Even so the angels have delight when they are fulfilling their desire in possession, and satisfying their spirit continually with desire, yet have none of the weariness that comes from satiety; wherefore, since they have no weariness, they continually desire, and because they have possession they have no pain. Thus, the greater is the desire of the soul in this state, the more satisfaction and desire it should experience, since it has the more of God and has not grief or pain.<sup>4</sup>

23. In this matter, however, it is well to note clearly the difference that exists between the possession of God through grace itself alone and the possession of Him through union; for the one consists in deep

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'and their languishing and pain are in a way infinite. And thus, when the soul suffers, although it suffers not so intensely as in the next life, yet [its suffering] seems to be a vivid image of that [suffering] yonder, since the soul is to a certain extent prepared to receive fullness, the privation of which is the greatest pain; although this pain is of another kind, for it dwells in the bosom of the love of the will, and here [on earth] love alleviates not pain.'

<sup>2</sup> Hom. XXX in Evang. E.p. omits: 'in writing of St. John.'

<sup>3</sup> [1 St. Peter i, 12.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'and satisfaction to the soul; and the greater is its desire, the more satisfaction and delight it should now feel in this desire, since it has the more of God; and thus it ought not to feel grief or pain.'

mutual love, but in the other there is also communication. There is as great a difference between these states as there is between betrothal and marriage. For in betrothal there is only a consent by agreement, and a unity of will between the two parties, and the jewels and the adornment of the bride-to-be, given her graciously by the bridegroom. But in marriage there is likewise communication between the persons, and union.<sup>1</sup> During the betrothal, although from time to time the bridegroom sees the bride and gives her gifts, as we have said, there is no union between them, for that is the end of betrothal. Even so, when the soul has attained to such purity in itself and in its faculties that the will is well purged of other strange tastes and desires, according to its lower and higher parts, and when it has given its consent to God with respect to all this, and the will of God and of the soul are as one in a consent that is ready and free, then it has attained to the possession of God through grace of will, in so far as can be by means of will and grace; and this signifies that God has given it, through its own consent, His true and entire consent, which comes through His grace.<sup>2</sup>

24. And this is the lofty state of spiritual betrothal of the soul with the Word, wherein the Spouse grants the soul great favours, and visits it most lovingly and frequently, wherein the soul receives great favours and delights. But these have nothing to do with those of marriage, for they are all preparations for the union of marriage; and, though it is true that they come to the soul<sup>3</sup> when it is completely purged from all creature affection (for spiritual betrothal, as we say, cannot take place until this happens), nevertheless<sup>4</sup> the soul has need of other and positive preparations on the part of God, of His visits and gifts whereby He purifies the soul ever more completely and beautifies and refines it so that it may be fitly prepared for such high union. In some souls more time is necessary than in others, for God works here according to the state of the soul.<sup>5</sup> This is prefigured in those maidens who were chosen for King Assuerus; although they had been taken

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'In this matter, however, we must note the difference that exists between the possession of God through grace alone and the possession of Him through union; for the one is a question of mutual love and the other argues a very special communication. This difference may be understood after the manner of that which exists between betrothal and marriage. For in betrothal there is an agreement and one will between the two parties, and the few jewels and ornaments of the bride-to-be given her graciously by the bridegroom. But in marriage there is likewise union and communication between the persons.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'to the possession of God through grace, in the betrothal and conformity of its will.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'But these have nothing to do with those of the spiritual marriage, for, though it is true that they all come to the soul.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds: 'for union and marriage.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'for God . . . the soul.'

from their own countries and from their fathers' houses, yet, before they were sent to the king's bed, they were kept waiting for a year, albeit within the enclosure of the palace.<sup>1</sup> For one half of the year they were prepared with certain ointments<sup>2</sup> of myrrh and other spices, and for the other half of the year with other and choicer ointments, after which they went to the king's bed.

25. During the time, then, of this betrothal and expectation of marriage in the unctions of the Holy Spirit, when the ointments that prepare the soul for union with God are very choice, the yearnings of the caverns of the soul are wont to be extreme and delicate. For, as those ointments are a most proximate preparation for union with God, because they are nearest to God and for this cause make the soul more desirous of Him and inspire it with a more delicate affection for Him, the desire is more delicate and also deeper; for the desire for God is a preparation for union with God.

26. Oh, how good a place would this be to warn souls whom God is leading to these delicate anointings to take care what they are doing and into whose hands they commit themselves, lest they go backward, were not this beyond the limits of that whereof we are speaking! But such is the compassion and pity that fills my heart when I see souls<sup>3</sup> going backward, and not only failing to submit themselves to the anointing of the spirit so that they may make progress therein, but even losing the effects of that anointing which they have received, that I must not fail to warn them here as to what they should do in order to avoid such loss, even though this should cause us to delay the return to our subject a little. I shall return to it shortly, and indeed all this will help us to understand the properties of these caverns. And since it is very necessary, not only for these souls that prosper on this way but also for all the rest who seek their Beloved, I am anxious to describe it.

27.<sup>4</sup> First, it must be known that, if a soul is seeking God, its Beloved is seeking it much more; and, if it sends after Him its loving desires, which are as fragrant to Him as a pillar of smoke that issues from the aromatic spices of myrrh and incense, He likewise sends after it the fragrance of His ointments, wherewith He draws the soul and causes it to run after Him. These ointments are His Divine inspirations and touches, which, whenever they are His, are ordered and ruled with

<sup>1</sup> [Esther ii, 12.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'certain souls.'

<sup>2</sup> C: 'certain odours.'

<sup>4</sup> P begins here and continues as far as § 59, with certain omissions.

respect to the perfection of the law of God and of faith, in which perfection the soul must ever draw nearer and nearer to God. And thus the soul must understand that the desire of God in all the favours that He bestows upon it in the unction and fragrance of His ointments is to prepare it for other choicer and more delicate ointments which are more after the temper of God, until it reaches such a delicate and pure state of preparation that it merits union with God and substantial transformation in all its faculties.

28. When, therefore, the soul reflects that God is the principal agent in this matter, and the guide of its blind self<sup>1</sup> Who will take it by the hand and lead it where it could not of itself go (namely, to the supernatural things which neither its understanding nor its will nor its memory could know as they are), then its chief care will be to see that it sets no obstacle in the way of the guide, who is the Holy Spirit, upon the road by which God is leading it, and which is ordained according to the law of God and faith, as we are saying. And this impediment may come to the soul if it allows itself to be led by another blind guide; and these blind guides that might lead it out of its way are three, namely, the spiritual director, the devil, and its own self.

29. With regard to the first of these, it is of great importance for the soul that desires to profit, and not to fall back, to consider<sup>2</sup> in whose hands it is placing itself; for as is the master, so will be the disciple, and as is the father, so will be the son. There is hardly anyone who in all respects will guide the soul perfectly along the highest stretch of the road, or even along the intermediate stretches, for it is needful that such a guide should be wise and discreet and experienced. The fundamental requirement of a guide in spiritual things is knowledge and discretion; yet, if a guide have no experience of the higher part of the road, he will be unable to direct the soul therein, when God leads it so far. A guide might even do the soul great harm if, not himself understanding the way of the spirit,<sup>3</sup> he should cause the soul, as often happens, to lose the unction of these delicate ointments, wherewith the Holy Spirit gradually prepares it for Himself, and if instead of this he should guide the soul by other and lower paths of which he has read here and there, and which are suitable only for beginners. Such guides know no more than how to deal with beginners—please God they may know even so

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and the blind man's boy.'] E.p. omits this phrase.

<sup>2</sup> C adds 'most diligently' and omits 'great' earlier in the sentence.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'the roads of the spirit.'

much!—and refuse to allow souls to go beyond these rudimentary acts of meditation and imagination, even though God is seeking to lead them farther, so that they may never exceed or depart from their natural capacity,<sup>1</sup> whereby they can achieve very little.

30. And in order that we may understand this the better, we must know that the state of beginners comprises meditation and discursive acts. In this state, it is necessary for the soul to be given material for meditation, and to make interior acts on its own account, and to take advantage of the spiritual heat and fire which come from sense; this is necessary in order to accustom the senses and desires to good things, so that, by being fed with this delight, they may become detached from the world. But, when this has been to some extent effected, God begins to bring the soul into the state of contemplation, which is wont to happen very quickly, especially in religious, because these, having renounced things of the world, quickly attune their senses and desires to God; and then they have nothing to do save to pass from meditation to contemplation, which happens when the discursive acts and the meditation of the soul itself cease, and the first fervours and sweetness of sense cease likewise, so that the soul cannot meditate as before, or find any help in the senses; for the senses remain in a state of aridity, inasmuch as their treasure is transformed into spirit, and no longer falls within the capacity of sense. And, as all the operations which the soul can perform on its own account naturally depend upon sense only, it follows that God is the agent in this state and the soul is the recipient; for the soul behaves only as one that receives and as one in whom these things are being wrought; and God as One that gives and acts and as One that works these things in the soul, giving it spiritual blessings in contemplation,<sup>2</sup> which is Divine love and knowledge in one—that is, a loving knowledge, wherein the soul has not to use its natural acts and meditations, for it can no longer enter into them as before.

31. It follows that at this time the soul must be led in a way entirely contrary to the way wherein it was led at first. If formerly it was given material for meditation, and practised meditation, this material must now be taken from it and it must not meditate; for, as I say, it will be unable to do so even though it would, and it will become distracted. And if formerly it sought sweetness and fervour, and found it, now

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'so that . . . capacity.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'that God in this state is in a special way the agent who infuses and teaches, and the soul is one that receives, [to whom He is] giving very spiritual blessings in contemplation.'

it must neither seek it nor desire it, for not only will it be unable to find it through its own diligence, but it will rather find aridity, for it turns from the quiet and peaceful blessings which were secretly given to its spirit, to the work that it desires to do with sense; and thus it will lose the one and not obtain the other, since no blessings are now given to it by means of sense as they were formerly. Wherefore in this state the soul must never have meditation imposed upon it, nor must it make any acts, nor strive after sweetness or fervour;<sup>1</sup> for this would be to set an obstacle in the way of the principal agent, who, as I say, is God. For God secretly and quietly infuses into the soul loving knowledge and wisdom without any intervention of specific acts,<sup>2</sup> although sometimes He specifically produces them in the soul for some length of time. And the soul has then to walk with loving advertence to God, without making specific acts, but conducting itself, as we have said, passively,<sup>3</sup> and making no efforts of its own, but preserving this simple, pure and loving advertence, like one that opens his eyes with the advertence of love.

32. Since God, then, as giver, is communing with the soul by means of loving and simple knowledge, the soul must likewise commune with Him by receiving with a loving and simple knowledge or advertence, so that knowledge may be united with knowledge and love with love. For it is meet that he who receives should behave in conformity with that which he receives, and not otherwise, in order to be able to receive and retain it as it is given to him; for, as the philosophers say, anything that is received is in the recipient according to the manner of acting of the recipient.<sup>4</sup> Wherefore it is clear that if the soul at this time were not to abandon its natural procedure of active meditation, it would not receive this blessing in other than a natural way. It would not, in fact, receive it, but would retain its natural act alone, for the supernatural cannot be received in a natural way, nor can it have aught to do with it.<sup>5</sup> And thus,<sup>6</sup> if the soul at this time desires to work on its

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'any acts produced by means of reflection, nor strive knowingly after sweetness or fervour.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'without any great difference, expression or multiplication of acts.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'without performing any other specific acts than those to which it feels that He is inclining it, but conducting itself, as it were, passively.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'for . . . recipient.' G gives the phrase in Latin.

<sup>5</sup> G: 'for the supernatural cannot be contained in the soul that is occupied in natural operations and acts.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'were not to abandon its ordinary discursive procedure, it would not receive this blessing save in a scanty and imperfect way, and thus it would not receive it with that perfection wherewith it was bestowed; for, being so superior and infused a blessing, it cannot be contained in so scanty and imperfect a form. And thus, etc.'

own account, and to do aught else than remain, quite passively and tranquilly, in that passive and loving advertence whereof we have spoken, making no natural act, save if God should unite it with Himself in some act, it would set a total and effective impediment in the way of the blessings which God is communicating to it supernaturally in loving knowledge.<sup>1</sup> This comes to pass first of all in the exercise of purgation,<sup>2</sup> as we have said above, and afterwards in increased sweetness of love. If, as I say, and as in truth is the case, the soul continues to receive these blessings passively and after the supernatural manner of God, and not after the manner of the natural soul,<sup>3</sup> it follows that, in order to receive them, this soul must be quite disencumbered, at ease, peaceful, serene and adapted to the manner of God; like the air, which receives greater illumination and heat from the sun when it is pure and cleansed and at rest. And thus the soul must be attached to nothing—nay, not even to any kind of meditation or sweetness, whether of sense or of spirit. For the spirit needs to be so free and so completely annihilated that any thought<sup>4</sup> or meditation which the soul in this state might desire, or any pleasure to which it may conceive an attachment, would impede and disturb it and would introduce noise into the deep silence which it is meet that the soul should observe, according both to sense and to spirit, so that it may hear the deep and delicate voice of God which speaks to the heart in this secret place, as He said through Osee,<sup>5</sup> in the utmost peace and tranquillity, so that the soul may listen and hear, as David heard, the words of God, when He speaks this peace in the soul. When this comes to pass, and the soul is conscious of being led into silence, and hearkens, it must forget even that loving advertence of which I have spoken, so that it may remain free for that which is then desired of it; for it must practise that advertence only when it is not conscious of being brought into solitude or rest or forgetfulness or attentiveness of the spirit, which is always accompanied by a certain interior absorption.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'whereof we have spoken' and continues 'reasoning [i.e. meditating] not as formerly, it would place an impediment in the way of the blessings which God is communicating to it in loving knowledge.'

<sup>2</sup> C: 'in loving knowledge in the exercise of purgation.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'after the manner of God and not after the manner of the soul.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'any particular thought.'

<sup>5</sup> Osee iii, 14.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'and hearkens, even the loving awareness of which I have spoken must be most pure, without any anxiety or reflection, so that the soul almost forgets it through being wholly occupied in hearing, in order that it may remain free for that which is then desired of it.'

33. Wherefore<sup>1</sup> at no time or season, when once the soul has begun to enter into this pure and restful state of contemplation, must it seek to gather to itself meditations, neither must it desire to find help in spiritual sweetness or delight,<sup>2</sup> but it must stand in complete detachment above all this and its spirit must be freed from it, as the prophet Habacuc said that he must needs do, in these words: 'I will stand upon my watch over my senses—that is, leaving them below—and I will fix my step upon the munition of my faculties—that is, not allowing them to advance a step in thought—and I will watch to see that which will be said to me—that is, I will receive that which is communicated to me.'<sup>3</sup> For we have already said that contemplation is receiving, and it is not possible that this loftiest wisdom and lineage of contemplation can be received save in a spirit that is silent and detached from<sup>4</sup> sweetness and knowledge. For this is that which is said by Isaias, in these words: 'Whom shall He teach knowledge and whom shall He make to hear<sup>5</sup> that which is heard?'<sup>6</sup> Them that are weaned from milk—that is, from sweetness and pleasures—and them that are drawn from the breasts—that is, from attachment to particular acts and knowledge. Take away the mist and the mote and the hairs, and cleanse thine eye, and the bright sun shall shine upon thee, and thou shalt see. Set the soul in the liberty of peace, and draw it away from the yoke and slavery of its operation, which is the captivity of Egypt; for all this is little more than gathering straw to make bricks; and lead it to the promised land flowing with milk and honey.

34. Oh, spiritual director, remember that it is to give the soul this freedom and holy rest which belongs to His sons that God calls it into the wilderness. There it journeys clad in festal robes, and with jewels of silver and of gold, having now despoiled Egypt<sup>7</sup> and taken away its riches. And not only so, but the Egyptians are drowned<sup>8</sup> in the sea of contemplation, where the Egyptian of sense finds no support or foothold, and sets free the child of God—that is, the spirit that has gone forth from the narrow limits and bounds of natural operation (which is to say from its lowly understanding, its crude perception,

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'This manner and [sic] forgetfulness is always accompanied by a certain interior absorption. Wherefore, etc.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'as is said at length in the tenth chapter of the first book of the *Dark Night*, and previously in the last chapter of the second book, and in the first chapter [the second in our edition] of the third book of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*.'

<sup>3</sup> [Habacuc ii, 1.] E.p. adds: 'passively.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'to understand.'

<sup>5</sup> Gr, P add: 'which is the sensual part.'

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'they are drowned.'] E.p.: 'but it drowns its enemies.' C: 'but it drowns the Egyptians.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'from particular.'

<sup>8</sup> Isaias xxviii, 9.

and its miserable liking)—so that God may give it the sweet manna; and, though the sweetness of this contains within itself all these sweetnesses and delights for which thou desirest to make the soul work, nevertheless, being so delicious that it melts in the mouth, the soul shall not taste of it if it desire to taste of any other delight or aught else, for it shall not receive it. Endeavour, then, to detach<sup>1</sup> the soul from all coveting of sweetness, pleasure and meditation, and disturb it not with care and solicitude of any kind for higher things, still less for lower things, but bring it into the greatest possible degree of solitude and withdrawal. For the more nearly the soul attains all this, and the sooner it reaches this restful tranquillity, the more abundantly does it become infused with the spirit of Divine wisdom, the loving, tranquil, lonely, peaceful, sweet ravisher of the spirit. At times the soul will feel itself to be tenderly and serenely ravished and wounded, knowing not by whom, nor whence, nor how, since the Spirit communicates Himself without any act on the part of the soul.<sup>2</sup>

35. And the smallest part of this that God brings to pass in the soul in holy rest and solitude is an inestimable blessing, greater than either the soul itself, or he that guides it, can imagine; and, if this be not realized at the time, it will in due course become manifest. But now, at least, the soul will be able to attain to a perception of estrangement and withdrawal from all things, sometimes more so than at others, together with a sweet aspiration of love and life in the spirit, and with an inclination to solitude and a sense of weariness with regard to creatures and the world. For, when the soul tastes of the spirit, it conceives a distaste for all that pertains to the flesh.

36. But the interior blessings that this silent contemplation leaves impressed upon the soul without its perception of them are, as I say, inestimable; for they are in fact the most secret and delicate anointings of the Holy Spirit, whereby He secretly fills the soul with riches and gifts and graces, for, after all, being God, He acts as God.<sup>3</sup> These blessings, then, and these great riches, these sublime and delicate anointings and touches of the Holy Spirit, which, on account of their delicate and subtle purity, can be understood neither by the soul nor by him that has to do with it, but only by Him Who infuses them in order to make the soul more pleasing to Himself: these blessings, with the greatest<sup>4</sup> facility, by even the very slightest of such acts as the soul

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'to uproot.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'in the sense aforementioned.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'and works as God.'

<sup>4</sup> C, G: 'the most welcome' [*gratissima* for *grandissima*].

may desire to make by applying its sense or desire to the attainment of some knowledge or sweetness or pleasure, are disturbed and hindered, which is a grave evil and a great shame and pity.

37. Oh, how grave a matter is this, and what cause it gives for wonder, that, while the harm done is inconspicuous, and the interference almost negligible, the harm should be more serious, and a matter for deeper sorrow and regret, than the disquieting and ruining of many souls of a more ordinary nature<sup>1</sup> which have not attained to this state of such supreme fineness and delicacy. It is as though a portrait of supreme beauty were touched by a clumsy hand, and were daubed with strange, crude colours. This would be a greater and a more crying shame than if many more ordinary portraits were besmeared in this way, and a matter of greater grief and pity. For, when the work of so delicate a hand has been so roughly treated, who will be able to restore its beauty?<sup>2</sup>

38. Although the gravity of this evil cannot be exaggerated, it is so common that there will hardly be found a single spiritual director who does not inflict it upon souls whom God is beginning, in this way, to draw nearer to Himself<sup>3</sup> in contemplation. For, whenever God is anointing the soul with some most delicate unction of loving knowledge—serene, peaceful, lonely and very far removed from sense and from all that has to do with thought—and when the soul cannot meditate or find pleasure in aught,<sup>4</sup> whether in higher things or in lower, or in any knowledge, since God is keeping it full of that lonely unction and inclined to solitude and rest, there will come some director who has no knowledge save of hammering and pounding like a blacksmith, and, because his only teaching is of that kind, he will say: ‘Come now, leave all this, for you are only wasting time and living in idleness. Get to work, meditate and make interior acts, for it is right that you should do these things for yourself and be diligent about them, for these other things are the practices of Illuminists and fools.’

39. And thus, since such persons have no understanding of the degrees of prayer or of the ways of the spirit, they cannot see that those acts which they counsel the soul to perform, and that progress along the path of meditation, have been done already, for such a soul as we

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: ‘than one which would appear much greater in ordinary souls.’

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits this sentence. G has: ‘For who will be able to amend and perfect that which was wrought by that Divine hand and which this [unskilful director] spoils with his lack of comprehension?’

<sup>3</sup> [The verb is *recoger*, from which is derived *recogimiento*, ‘recollection.’]

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: ‘and when He is keeping it in such a state that it cannot find pleasure in aught, or meditate upon aught.’

have been describing has by this time attained to negation of sense; and, when the goal has been reached, and the road traversed, there is no need to set out on the road again, for to do this would only be to walk away<sup>1</sup> from the goal. And thus, not understanding that such a soul is already upon the way<sup>2</sup> of the spirit, where there is no meditation, that its meditation<sup>3</sup> is now coming to an end, that God is the agent,<sup>4</sup> and that He is secretly speaking to the solitary soul, while the soul keeps silence, such a director applies fresh ointments<sup>5</sup> to the soul, relating to cruder knowledge and sweetness, and, by imposing these things upon it, he takes away its solitude and recollection, and consequently spoils the wondrous work that God was painting in it. In this way the soul neither does one thing nor makes progress in another; it is just as if the director were merely striking an anvil.<sup>6</sup>

40. Let such as these take heed and remember that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent and mover of souls and never loses His care for them; and that they themselves are not agents, but only instruments to lead souls by the rule of faith and the law of God, according to the spirit that God is giving to each one. Let them not, therefore, merely aim at guiding a soul according to their own way and the manner suitable to themselves, but let them see if they know the way by which God is leading the soul, and, if they know it not, let them leave the soul in peace and not disturb it. And, in conformity with this, let them seek to lead the soul into greater solitude and liberty and tranquillity, and to give it a certain freedom so that the bodily and spiritual senses may not be bound to anything when God leads the soul in this way, and let them not worry or grieve, thinking that it is doing nothing. For when it is detached from all knowledge of its own, and from every desire and all affections of its sensual part, and dwells in the pure negation of poverty of spirit, wholly emptied of the mists of sweetness, wholly weaned from the breast and from milk (which is what the soul must be careful to do, as far as in it lies, and the director must aid the soul to deny itself in all these ways), it is impossible<sup>7</sup> that God will not perform His own part. It is more impossible than that the sun should fail to shine in a serene and unclouded sky; for as the sun, when it

<sup>1</sup> C: 'to descend.'

<sup>2</sup> B, G, e.p.: 'is already in the life.'

<sup>3</sup> C, G, Gr, e.p.: 'its sense.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. adds: 'in a particular way.'

<sup>5</sup> G: 'such a soul, by making acts or meditating, does naught else than apply to itself fresh ointments.' [The word translated 'ointments,' both here and in the text, is generally rendered 'unctions' above.]

<sup>6</sup> P: 'were striking hard earth.' E.p. omits: 'it is . . . anvil.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'according to the method of procedure of the Divine goodness and mercy.'

risers in the morning and shines into your house, will enter if you open the shutter,<sup>1</sup> even so will God, Who keeps Israel and slumbers not, still less sleeps,<sup>2</sup> enter the soul that is empty and fill it with blessings.

41. God, like the sun, is above our souls and ready to enter them. Let spiritual directors, then, be content with preparing the soul according to evangelical perfection, which consists in the detachment and emptiness of sense and of spirit; and let them not seek to go beyond this in the building up of the soul, for that work belongs only to the Lord, from Whom comes down every perfect gift.<sup>3</sup> For, if the Lord build not the house, in vain does he labour that builds it;<sup>4</sup> and in every soul, in the manner that seems good to Him, He will build a supernatural building. Prepare, then, the nature of the soul by annihilating its operations, for these disturb rather than help. That is your office; and the office of God, as the Wise Man says,<sup>5</sup> is to direct the soul to supernatural blessings by ways and in manners whereof neither you nor the soul can know anything. Say not, again: 'Oh, he is making no progress, for he is doing nothing!' For if the understanding of the soul<sup>6</sup> at that time has no more pleasure in objects of the understanding than it had before, it is making progress in walking towards the supernatural. And say not: 'Oh, but he understands nothing distinctly.' For if the soul were to understand anything distinctly,<sup>7</sup> it would be making no progress, for God is incomprehensible and transcends the understanding; and thus the greater the progress it makes, the farther it must withdraw from itself, walking in faith, believing and not understanding;<sup>8</sup> and thus it approaches God more nearly by not understanding than by understanding. Grieve not, therefore, at this, for if the understanding goes not backward and desires not to occupy itself with distinct knowledge and other ideas pertaining to this world, it is making progress. For in this case not to go backward is to go forward; it is to progress in faith,<sup>9</sup> for, when the understanding knows not, neither can know, what God is, it is walking toward Him by not understanding; and thus what you are condemning in your penitent is fitting for his good, rather than that he should embarrass himself with distinct kinds of understanding.<sup>10</sup>

42. 'Oh,' you will say, 'but if the understanding understands not

<sup>1</sup> C, G: 'the window.' E.p.: 'if you open the door.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxx, 4 [A.V., cxxi, 4].

<sup>4</sup> Psalm cxxvi, 1 [A.V., cxxvii, 1].

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'the understanding of.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'at that time.'

<sup>9</sup> P, e.p.: 'For to go forward is to progress in faith.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p. adds: 'and not walk in perfect faith.'

<sup>3</sup> St. James i, 17.

<sup>5</sup> [Proverbs xvi, 9.]

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'and not seeing.'

distinctly, the will at least will be idle and will not love, for it is impossible to love that which one understands not.' There is truth in this, especially as regards the natural acts and operations of the soul, where the will loves only that of which the understanding has distinct knowledge. But in the contemplation<sup>1</sup> of which we are speaking, wherein God, as we have said, infuses into the soul, there is no necessity for distinct knowledge, nor for the soul to perform any acts, for God, in one act, is communicating<sup>2</sup> to the soul loving knowledge, which at one and the same time is like light giving heat without any distinction being perceptible between the two, and at that time as is understanding, even so is love in the will. As this knowledge is general and dark, and the understanding is unable to understand distinctly that which it understands, the will likewise loves in a general way without the making of any distinction. And, as God in this delicate communication is both light and love, He informs these two faculties equally, though at times He acts on the one more than on the other. At times, therefore, the soul is more conscious of understanding than of love, and at other times it is more conscious of love<sup>3</sup> than of understanding; and at times all is understanding, and there is hardly any love; while at other times all is love and there is no understanding. And thus, as far as the acts are concerned which the soul performs on its own account, there can be no love without understanding; but in the acts which God performs in the soul, it is different, for He can communicate Himself in the one faculty and not in the other. Thus He can enkindle the will by means of a touch of the heat of His love, although the understanding may have no understanding thereof, just as a person can receive heat from a fire without seeing that he is near the fire. And in this way the will may oftentimes feel itself to be enkindled or filled with tenderness and love without knowing or understanding anything more distinctly than before, since God is setting love in order in it, even as the Bride says in the Songs, in these words: 'The King introduced me into the cellar of wine, and set in order charity in me.'<sup>4</sup>

43. There is no reason, therefore, to fear that the will in this state will be idle; for, if it ceases to perform acts concerning particular kinds of knowledge, as far as its own efforts are concerned, God performs them within it, inebriating it in infused love, either by means of the

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'But in the period of contemplation.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'nor for the soul to engage in much reasoning, for at that time God is communicating.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. has 'of more intense love,' and omits the rest of the paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> Canticles ii, 4.

knowledge of contemplation, or without such knowledge, as we have just said; and these acts are as much better than those made by the soul and as much more meritorious<sup>1</sup> and delectable, as the mover and infuser of this love<sup>2</sup>—namely, God—is better than the soul; and God establishes love in the soul because the will is near God and is detached from other pleasures. The soul, therefore, must see to it that the will is empty and stripped of its affections; for, if it is not going backward by desiring to experience some sweetness or pleasure, it is going forward, even though it have no particular perception of this in God, and it is soaring upward to God above all things, since it takes no pleasure in anything. It is going toward God, although it may be taking no particular and distinct delight in Him, nor may be loving Him with any distinct act, for it is taking greater pleasure in Him secretly, by means of that dark and general infusion of love, than it does in all things that are distinct,<sup>3</sup> for it sees clearly in this state that nothing gives it so much pleasure as that solitary quiet. And it is loving Him above all things that can be loved, since it has flung from itself all other kinds of sweetness and pleasure which have become distasteful to it. And there is thus no reason to be troubled, for, if the will can find no sweetness and pleasure in particular acts, it is going forward; seeing that to refrain from going backward and from embracing anything that belongs to sense is to go forward towards the inaccessible, which is God, and thus there is no wonder that the soul has no perception thereof.<sup>4</sup> Wherefore, in order to journey to God, the will has rather to be continually detaching itself from everything delectable and pleasant than to be conceiving an attachment to it. In this way it completely fulfils the precept of love, which is to love God above all things; and this cannot be unless it have spiritual emptiness and detachment<sup>5</sup> with regard to them all.<sup>6</sup>

44. Neither is there any cause for misgivings when the memory is voided of its forms and figures, for, since God has no form or figure,

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'And therefore there is no reason to fear that the soul in this state will be idle for, if it ceases to perform acts governed by particular kinds of knowledge, as far as its own efforts are concerned, He inebriates it, nevertheless, in infused love, by means of the knowledge of contemplation, as we have just said; and these acts which are performed through following infused contemplation are as much better and as much more meritorious.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'the mover who infuses this love.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'than if it were governed by distinct kinds of knowledge.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'and thus . . . thereof.'

<sup>5</sup> Thus B, C, G, Gr., P. T, e.p.: 'special emptiness.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'and if this is to happen with all perfection, it must happen with this special emptiness and detachment as to them all.'

the memory is safe if it be voided of form or figure, and it is approaching God the more nearly; for, the more it leans upon the imagination, the farther it is going from God, and the greater is the peril wherein it walks, since God is incomprehensible and therefore cannot be apprehended by the imagination.

45. Such directors as we have been describing fail to understand souls that are now walking in this solitary and quiet contemplation,<sup>1</sup> because they themselves have not advanced beyond a very ordinary kind of meditation, or similar act, nor perhaps have arrived even so far; and they think, as I have said, that these souls are idle, because the animal man—that is, one that advances not beyond the animal feelings of the sensual part of the soul—perceives not, as Saint Paul says, the things that are of God.<sup>2</sup> Wherefore they disturb the peace of this quiet and hushed contemplation which God has been giving these souls by His own power, and they make their penitents meditate and reason and perform acts, not without causing them great displeasure, repugnance and distraction, since their souls would fain remain in their quiet and peaceful state of recollection; but their directors persuade them to strive after sweetness and fervour, though they ought rather to advise them the contrary. The penitents, however, are unable to do as they did previously, and can enter into none of these things, for the time for them has now passed and they belong no more to their proper path; and so they are doubly disturbed, and believe that they are going to perdition; and their directors encourage them in this belief, and parch their spirits, and take from them the precious unctions wherewith God was anointing them in solitude and tranquillity. This, as I have said, is a great evil; their directors are plunging them into mire and mourning,<sup>3</sup> for they are losing one thing and labouring without profit at the other.

46. Such persons have no knowledge of what spirituality is, and they offer a great insult and great irreverence to God, by laying their coarse hands where God is working. For it has cost Him dearly to bring these souls to this place and He greatly esteems having brought them to this solitude and emptiness of their faculties and operations, that He may speak to their heart, which is what He ever desires. He

<sup>1</sup> G continues, after 'wherein it walks': 'and the farther it withdraws itself from it [i.e. the imagination], the more surely it journeys. And those [directors] who are not experienced cannot properly understand these souls, nor do they know that the Lord is keeping them in this state of quiet contemplation.'

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 14.

<sup>3</sup> [i.e. mourning for what they lose and the mire of their present unhappy state from which they strive to get free.]

has Himself taken them by the hand, and He Himself reigns in their souls in abundant peace and quietness, causing the natural acts<sup>1</sup> of their faculties to fail wherewith they toiled all night and wrought nothing. And He has brought peace to their spirits without the operation of sense, for neither sense nor any act thereof is capable of receiving spirit.

47. How precious in His sight is this tranquillity or slumbering or annihilation of sense can be clearly seen in that adjuration, so notable and effective, that He utters in the Songs, where He says: 'I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the goats and harts of the fields, that ye awaken not my beloved nor cause her to wake until she please.'<sup>2</sup> Herein, by introducing these solitary and retiring animals, He gives us to understand how much He loves that solitary forgetfulness and slumber. But these spiritual directors will not let the soul have repose or quiet, but demand that it shall continually labour and work, that it may leave no room for God to work, and that that which He is working may be undone and wiped out through the operation of the soul. They have become as the little foxes which tear down the flowering vine of the soul;<sup>3</sup> for which reason God complains through Isaias, saying: 'You have devoured<sup>4</sup> My vineyard.'<sup>5</sup>

48. But, it may possibly be said, these directors err with good intent, through insufficiency of knowledge. This, however, does not excuse them for the advice which they are rash enough to give without first learning to understand either the way that the soul is taking or its spirit. If they understand not this, they are laying their coarse hands upon things that they understand not, instead of leaving them for those who understand them better; for it is a thing of no small weight, and no slight crime, to cause the soul to lose inestimable blessings by counselling it to go out of its way and to leave it prostrate.<sup>6</sup> And thus one who rashly errs, being under an obligation to give reliable advice—as is every man, whatever his office—shall not go unpunished, by reason of the harm that he has done. For the business of God has to be undertaken with great circumspection, and with eyes wide open, most of all in matters so delicate and sublime as the conduct of these souls, where a man may bring them almost infinite gain if the advice that he gives be good and almost infinite loss if it be mistaken.

49. But if you will still maintain that such a director has some

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'the discursive acts.'

<sup>2</sup> Canticles iii, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Canticles ii, 15. E.p.: 'which destroy.'

<sup>4</sup> G, e.p.: 'You have destroyed.' C: 'You have eaten.'

<sup>5</sup> Isaias iii, 14.

<sup>6</sup> [Lit., 'right on the ground.']

excuse, though for myself I can see none, you will at least be unable to say that there is any excuse for one who, in his treatment of a soul, never allows it to go out of his jurisdiction, for certain vain reasons and intentions which he best knows. Such a person will not go unpunished, for it is certain that, if that soul is to make progress by going forward on the spiritual road, wherein God is ever aiding it, it will have to change the style and method of its prayer, and it will of necessity require instruction of a higher kind and a deeper spirituality than that of such a director. For not all directors have sufficient knowledge to meet all the possibilities and cases which they encounter on the spiritual road, neither is their spirituality so perfect that they know how a soul has to be guided and directed in every state of the spiritual life; at least no man should think that he knows everything concerning this, or that God will cease leading a given soul farther onward. Not everyone who can hew a block of wood is able to carve an image; nor is everyone who can carve it able to smooth and polish it; nor is he that can polish it able to paint it; nor can everyone that is able to paint it complete it with the final touches. Each one of these, in working upon an image, can do no more than that with which he himself is familiar, and, if he tries to do more, he will only ruin his work.

50. How, then, we may ask, if you are only a hewer of wood, and merely try to make a soul despise the world and mortify its desires; or, if at best you are a carver, which means that you can lead a soul to holy meditations, but can do no more: how, in such a case, will this soul attain to the final perfection of a delicate painting, the art of which consists neither in the hewing of wood, nor in the carving of it, nor even in the outlining of it, but in the work which God Himself must do in it? It is certain, then, that if your instruction is always of one kind, and you cause the soul to be continually bound to you, it will either go backward, or, at the least, will not go forward.<sup>1</sup> For what, I ask you, will the image be like, if you never do any work upon it save hewing and hammering, which in the language of the soul is exercising the faculties? When will this image be finished? When or how will it be left for God to paint it? Is it possible that you yourself can perform all these offices, and consider yourself so consummate a master that this soul shall never need any other?

51. And supposing that you have sufficient experience to direct some one soul, which perchance may have no ability to advance beyond your teaching, it is surely impossible for you to have sufficient experi-

<sup>1</sup> P omits the remainder of this paragraph, and the three paragraphs following.

ence for the direction of all those whom you refuse to allow to go out of your hands; for God leads each soul along different roads and there shall hardly be found a single spirit who can walk even half the way which is suitable for another. Who can be like Saint Paul and have the skill to make himself all things to all men, that he may gain them all?<sup>1</sup> You yourself tyrannize over souls, and take away their liberty, and arrogate to yourself the breadth and liberty of evangelical doctrine, so that you not only strive that they may not leave you, but, what is worse, if any one of them<sup>2</sup> should at some time go and ask the advice of another director, or discuss with him anything that he could not suitably discuss with you, or if God should lead him in order to teach him something which you teach him not, you behave to him (I say it not without shame) like a husband who is jealous of his wife; nor is your jealousy even due to a desire for the honour of God—it is due only to your own pride and presumption.<sup>3</sup> For how can you know that that soul has not the need to go to another? Great is the indignation of God with such directors, whom He promises punishment when He speaks through the prophet Ezechiel and says: 'Ye fed not My flock but clothed yourselves with their wool and drank their milk; I will require My flock at your hand.'<sup>4</sup>

52. Such persons, then, ought to give these souls freedom, for they have an obligation to allow them to go to others and to put a good face upon it, since they know not by what means God desires such souls to make progress, especially when they dislike the instruction that they are receiving, which is a sign that God is leading them on farther by another way and that they need another director. The director himself, in such a case, should advise a change, since any other advice springs from foolish pride and presumption.

53.<sup>5</sup> Let us now leave this question and speak of another pestilential habit of such directors as these, or of others even worse than they. For it may come to pass that God will be anointing certain souls with holy desires and impulses to leave the world, to change their life and condition, to serve Him and despise the world (it is a great thing in His eyes that they should have been brought thus far, for the things of the world are not according to the heart of God), and these directors, using human arguments or putting forward considerations quite

<sup>1</sup> [1 Corinthians ix, 22.]

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'if you know that any one of them.'

<sup>3</sup> G: 'you behave harshly to him, which is not due to your zeal (*celo*) for the honour and glory of God, but to jealousy (*celos*) coming from your own pride and presumption.'

<sup>4</sup> Ezechiel xxxiv, 2, 3, 10.

<sup>5</sup> G omits this paragraph.

contrary to the doctrine of Christ and His way of mortification and despising of all things, advise them to delay their decision, or place obstacles in their path, from motives of their own interest or their own pleasure, or because they fear where no fear is; or, what is still worse, they sometimes labour<sup>1</sup> to remove these desires from their penitents' hearts. Such directors show a wrong spirit, and are undevout, and clad, as it were, in very worldly garb, having little of the tenderness of Christ, since they neither enter themselves, nor allow others to enter. And our Saviour says: 'Woe unto you that have taken away the key of knowledge, and enter not in yourselves nor allow others to enter!'<sup>2</sup> For these persons in truth are placed like barriers and obstacles at the gate of Heaven, remembering not that God has placed them there that they may compel those whom God calls to enter in, as He has commanded;<sup>3</sup> whereas they, on the other hand, are compelling souls not to enter in by the narrow gate that leads to life; in this way such a man is a blind guide who can obstruct the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the soul. This comes to pass in many ways, as has here been said; some do it knowingly, others unconsciously; but neither class shall remain unpunished, since, having assumed their office, they are under an obligation to know and consider what they do.

54. The other blind guide of whom we have spoken, who can hinder the soul in this kind of recollection, is the devil, who, being himself blind, desires the soul to be blind also. When the soul is in these lofty and solitary places wherein are infused the delicate unctions of the Holy Spirit (at which he has great grief and envy, for he sees the soul flying beyond him, and can in no wise lay hold on it, though he sees that it is gaining great riches), the devil tries to cover this detachment and withdrawal, as it were, with cataracts of knowledge and mists of sensible sweetness, which are sometimes good, so that he may entice the soul more surely, and thus cause it to have commerce once more with sense, and to look at these things and embrace them, so that it may continue its journey to God in reliance upon this good knowledge and these delights. And herein he distracts it and very easily withdraws it from that solitude and recollection, wherein, as we have said, the Holy Spirit is working these great things secretly. And then the soul, being of itself inclined to sensible enjoyment, especially if these are the things which it is really desiring, is very easily led to cling to

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'set out.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xi, 52.

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'in His Gospel.' C: 'saying through St. Luke: Insist, make them come in, that My house may be filled with guests.'

such kinds of knowledge and such delights, and withdraws itself from the solitude wherein God works. For (it says), as previously it was doing nothing, this other state seems better, for it is now doing something. It is a great pity that it cannot realize how, for the sake of one mouthful, it is preventing itself from feeding wholly upon God Himself, when He absorbs it in these solitary and spiritual unctions of His mouth.

55. In this way, with hardly any trouble, the devil works the greatest injuries, causing the soul to lose great riches, and dragging it forth like a fish, with the tiniest bait, from the depths of the pure waters of the spirit, where it had no support or foothold but was engulfed and immersed in God. And hereupon he drags it to the bank, giving it help and support, and showing it something whereon it may lean, so that it may walk upon its own feet with great labour instead of floating in the waters of Siloe, that go with silence,<sup>1</sup> bathed in the unctions of God. And this the devil does to such an extent<sup>2</sup> that it is a matter for great marvel; and, since a slight injury is more serious to a soul in this condition than is a serious injury to many other souls, as we have said,<sup>3</sup> there is hardly any soul walking on this road which does not meet with great injuries and suffer great losses. For the evil one takes his stand, with great cunning, on the road which leads from sense to spirit,<sup>4</sup> deceiving and luring the soul by means of sense, and giving it sensual things, as we have said, so that it may rest in them and not escape from him; and the soul is entrapped with the greatest ease,<sup>5</sup> for it knows of nothing better than this, and thinks not that anything is being lost by it, but rather considers it a great blessing, and receives it readily, thinking that God has come to visit it; and in this way it fails to enter into the innermost chamber of the Spouse, but stands at the door to see what is happening. The devil, as Job says, beholdeth every high thing—that is to say, concerning souls—that he may assault it.<sup>6</sup> And if perchance any soul enters into recollection, he labours to bring about its ruin by means of horrors, fears or pains of the body, or by outward sounds and noises, causing it to be distracted by sense,<sup>7</sup> in order to bring it out and distract it from the interior spirit, until he

<sup>1</sup> [Isaias viii, 6.]

<sup>2</sup> P: 'And to this the devil attaches such importance.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'and since a slight injury inflicted upon many souls in this condition is more serious.'

<sup>4</sup> C, Gr, P add: 'as is his invariable custom, so that it [the soul] shall not pass from sense to spirit.'

<sup>5</sup> T: 'with the greatest difficulty.'

<sup>6</sup> [Job xli, 25: A.V., xli, 34.]

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'by the sound.'

can do no more and so leaves it. And with such ease does he corrupt these precious souls, and squander their great riches, that, although he thinks this of greater importance than to bring about the fall of many others, he esteems it not highly because of the facility with which it is done and the little effort that it costs him. In this sense we may understand that which God said to Job concerning the devil, namely: 'He shall drink up a river and shall not marvel, and he trusteth that the Jordan may run into his mouth—by the Jordan being understood the summit of perfection. In his eyes as with a hook shall he take him, and with stakes shall he bore through his nostrils.'<sup>1</sup> That is, with the darts of the knowledge, wherewith he is piercing the soul, he will disperse its spirituality; for the breath which goes out through his nostrils, when they are pierced, is dispersed in many directions. And later he says: 'The beams of the sun shall be under him and they shall scatter gold under him as mire.'<sup>2</sup> For he causes souls that have been enlightened to lose the marvellous rays of Divine knowledge, and from souls that are rich he takes away and scatters the precious gold of Divine adornment.

§6. Oh, souls! Since God is showing you such sovereign<sup>3</sup> mercies as to lead you through this state of solitude and recollection, withdrawing you from your labours of sense, return not to sense again. Lay aside your operations, for, though once, when you were beginners, they helped you to deny the world and yourselves, they will now be a great obstacle and hindrance to you, since God is granting you the grace of Himself working within you. If you are careful to set your faculties<sup>4</sup> upon naught soever, withdrawing them from everything and in no way hindering them, which is the proper part for you to play in this state, and if you only wait upon God with loving and pure attentiveness, as I said above, in the way which I there described (working no violence to the soul<sup>5</sup> save to detach it from everything and set it free,<sup>6</sup> lest you disturb and spoil its peace or tranquillity), God will feed<sup>7</sup> your soul for you with heavenly food,<sup>8</sup> since you are not hindering Him.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Job xli, 18-19 [A.V., xli, 23-4].

<sup>2</sup> Job xli, 21 [A.V., xli, 30].

<sup>3</sup> C, Gr: 'noted.' G: 'singular.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'your operations.'

<sup>5</sup> [P. Silverio's text has (for 'working no violence to the soul') 'which must be when you have no desire to be attentive, for you must work no violence to the soul.' This seems to be a corruption.] E.p. abbreviates: 'with loving and pure attentiveness, without working violence to the soul.'

<sup>6</sup> B, G, e.p.: 'and raise it.'

<sup>7</sup> B: 'will cure.'

<sup>8</sup> [Lit., 'celestial refecton.'] C: 'spiritual perfection.'

<sup>9</sup> G: 'God will regale it for you and fill it with spiritual blessings if you hinder Him not by means of operations of sense.'

57. The third blind guide of the soul is the soul itself, which, not understanding itself, as we have said, becomes perturbed and does itself harm. For it knows not how to work save by means of sense, and thus, when God is pleased to bring it into that emptiness and solitude where it can neither use its faculties nor make any acts, it sees that it is doing nothing, and strives to do something:<sup>1</sup> in this way it becomes distracted and full of aridity and displeasure, whereas formerly it was rejoicing in the rest of the spiritual silence and peace wherein God was secretly giving it joy. And it may come to pass that God persists in keeping the soul in that silent tranquillity, while the soul persists in crying out with its imagination and walking with its understanding; even as children, whom their mothers carry in their arms so that they may not have to walk, keep crying and striking out with their feet because they are anxious to walk, and thus neither make any progress themselves nor allow their mothers to do so. Or it is as when a painter is painting a portrait and his subject will not allow him to do anything because he keeps moving.

58. The soul in this state must bear in mind that, although it is not conscious of making any progress, it is making much more than when it was walking on foot; for it is because God is bearing it in His arms that it is not conscious of such movement. And although it is doing<sup>2</sup> nothing, it is nevertheless accomplishing much more than if it were working, since God is working within it. And it is not remarkable that the soul should be unable to see this, for sense cannot perceive that which God works in the soul. Let the soul leave itself in the hands of God and have confidence in Him and entrust itself neither to the hands nor to the works of others; for, if it remains thus, it will make sure progress, since it is in no danger save when it desires to occupy its faculties in something.<sup>3</sup>

59. Let us now return to the matter of these deep caverns of the faculties wherein we said that the suffering of the soul is wont to be great when God is anointing and preparing it with these subtle<sup>4</sup> unctions in order that He may unite it with Himself. These unctions are sometimes so subtle and sublime that they penetrate the inmost substance of the depth of the soul,<sup>5</sup> preparing it and filling it with

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'more sensibly and expressly.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'it seems to be doing.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'and have confidence in Him; for, if it do this, it will make sure progress, for it is in no danger save when it desires, on its own account or in its own way, to work with its faculties.' P ends the treatise here and A recommences with the following paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'subtle and delicate.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'the inmost part of the ground [i.e. bottom] of the soul.'

sweetness in such a way that its suffering and fainting with desire in the boundless emptiness of these caverns is likewise boundless. Here we must note this: if the unctions that were preparing these caverns for the union of the spiritual marriage are as sublime as we have said, what will the possession be which they afterwards attain? It is certain that, even as was the thirst and hunger and suffering of the caverns, so now will be the satisfaction and fullness and delight thereof; and, as was the delicacy of the preparations, even so will be the wonder of the possession and fruition of sense,<sup>1</sup> which is the vigour and virtue that belong to the substance of the soul that it may perceive and have fruition of the objects of the faculties.

60. These faculties the soul here calls caverns, and with great propriety,<sup>2</sup> for, as it perceives<sup>3</sup> that they are able to contain the deep intelligences and splendours of these lamps, the soul is able to see clearly that they have a depth as great as is that of the intelligence and the love; and that they have capacity and depth as great as are the various things<sup>4</sup> which they receive from the intelligences, the sweetnesses and the fruitions; all of which things are established and received in this cavern of the sense of the soul, which is the soul's virtue of capacity for possessing, perceiving and having pleasure in everything, as I say. Even as the common sense of the fancy is a receptacle for all objects of the outward senses, even so this ordinary sense of the soul is enlightened and made rich by a possession that is so lofty and glorious.

### Which were dark and blind

61. There are two reasons for which the eye may be unable to see: either it may be in darkness or it may be blind. God is the light and the object<sup>5</sup> of the soul; when this light illumines it not, it is in darkness, even though its power of vision may be most excellent. When it is in sin, or when it employs its desires upon aught else, it is then blind; and even though the light of God then shines upon it,<sup>6</sup> it sees it not, being blind. The darkness of the soul is the ignorance of the soul;<sup>7</sup> before God enlightened it through this transformation, it was blind and ignorant concerning many good things of God, even as the Wise Man says that he was blind before Wisdom illumined him, using these words: 'He illumined my ignorance.'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.p.: 'the fruition and possession of the feeling of the soul.'

<sup>2</sup> C: 'and very profoundly.'

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'they perceive.' Cf. p. 179, below.]

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'the various causes.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'and the true object.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'even though it may not lack the light of God.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'By the darkness of the soul is [meant] its practical ignorance.'

<sup>8</sup> Ecclesiasticus li, 26.

62. Speaking spiritually, it is one thing to be in darkness and another to be in thick darkness; for to be in thick darkness is to be blind (that is, as we have said, in sin); but to be in darkness only is something that may happen when one is not in sin. This may be in two ways: in the natural sense, when the soul has no light from certain natural things; and in the supernatural sense, when it has no light from supernatural things; and, with regard to both these things, the soul here says that its understanding<sup>1</sup> was dark before this precious union.<sup>2</sup> For, until the Lord said: *Fiat lux*,<sup>3</sup> thick darkness was upon the face of the abyss of the cavern of sense; and the deeper is this abyss and the more profound are its caverns, when God, Who is light, enlightens it not, the more abysmal and profound is the thick darkness that is upon it. And thus it is impossible for the soul to raise its eyes to the Divine light, or even to think of such light, for it knows not of what manner is this light, since it has never seen it; wherefore it cannot desire it, but will rather desire thick darkness, knowing not what it is like; and it will go from one darkness to another, guided by that darkness, for darkness cannot lead to anything save to fresh darkness. Then, as David says: 'Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth its night.'<sup>4</sup> And thus one abyss calls to another abyss; an abyss of thick darkness to another abyss of thick darkness and an abyss of light to another abyss of light; each like calls to its like and infuses it.<sup>5</sup> And thus the light of the grace that God had already given to this soul, wherewith He had opened the eye of its abyss to the Divine light, and so had made it pleasing to Himself, has called to another abyss of grace, which is this Divine transformation of the soul in God, whereby the eye of sense is so greatly enlightened and made pleasing to Him<sup>6</sup> that light and will are both one, the natural light is united to the supernatural and the supernatural light alone shines; even as the light created by God was united with that of the sun and the light of the sun alone now shines without the other failing.

63. And the soul was also blind inasmuch as it took pleasure in other things than God; for the blindness of the higher and rational sense is that desire which, like a cataract and a cloud, overlays and covers the eye of reason,<sup>7</sup> so that the soul shall not see the things that

<sup>1</sup> So Gr, T, e.p., A, B, C, G have: 'its sense.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'that its understanding was dark, without God.'

<sup>3</sup> Genesis i, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xviii, 2 [A.V., xix, 2].

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'and infuses it.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. reads 'very greatly enlightened and made pleasing to Him' and omits the rest of the paragraph.

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'of the heart' [*corazón* for *razón*].

are in front of it. And thus, for as long as the soul took any pleasure in sense, it was blind and could not see the great riches and Divine beauties that were behind. For just as, if a man sets anything before his eyes, however small, this suffices to obstruct his sight so that he cannot see other things that may be in front of him, however large they be, just so any small desire or idle act in the soul suffices to obstruct its vision of all these great and Divine things, which come after the pleasures and desires for which the soul longs.

64. Oh, that one might describe here how impossible it is for the soul that has other desires to judge of the things of God as they are! For, in order to judge the things of God aright, the soul must cast out wholly from itself its own desire and pleasure and must not judge them together with Him; else it will infallibly<sup>1</sup> come to consider the things of God as though they were not of God and those that are not of God as though they were of God. For, when that cataract and cloud covers the eye of judgment, the soul sees nothing but the cataract<sup>2</sup>—sometimes of one colour, sometimes of another, just as it may happen to be; and the soul thinks that the cataract is God, for, as we have said, it can see nothing beyond the cataract, which covers the senses, and God cannot be apprehended by sense. And thus desire and the pleasures of the soul hinder it from a knowledge of lofty things, as the Wise Man says, in these words: 'The union of vanity obscureth good things, and the inconstancy of desire overturneth the sense, though there be no malice.'<sup>3</sup>

65. Wherefore those persons who are not spiritual enough to be purged of their desires and pleasures, and still to some extent follow their animal nature with respect to these, may think much of the base and vile things of the spirit, which are those that come nearest to the sensual condition wherein they still live, and they will consider them to be of great importance; while those things that are lofty and spiritual, which are those that are farthest withdrawn from sense, they will count of small importance and will not esteem them, and will even consider them to be folly, as Saint Paul says, in these words: 'The animal man perceiveth not the things of God; they are to him as foolishness and he cannot understand them.'<sup>4</sup> The animal man is he that still lives according to the desires and pleasures of his nature. For, although these may be derived from spirit and be born there, yet, if one desires to cling to them with his natural desire, they then become

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits this word.

<sup>3</sup> Wisdom iv, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Here and below, e.p. reads 'cloud' for 'cataract.'

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 14.

natural desires ; for it is of small importance that the object of this desire should be supernatural if the desire proceeds from itself and has its root and strength in nature, for it has the same substance and nature as if it related to matter and a natural object.<sup>1</sup>

66. You will say to me: 'But when God is desired, is not this supernatural?' I reply that it is not always so, but only when God infuses this desire, and Himself gives it its strength,<sup>2</sup> and then it is a very different thing. When you, of your own accord, desire to possess Him, this is no more than natural;<sup>3</sup> nor will it ever be otherwise unless it be informed by God. And thus when you, of your own accord, desire to cling to spiritual pleasures, and exercise your own natural desire, you are spreading a cataract over the eye of the soul and you are an animal being and cannot therefore understand or judge that which is spiritual, which is higher than any natural desire and sense. And if you are still doubtful, I know not what to say to you save to bid you read these words again, and then perhaps you will cease to doubt, for what I have said is the substance of the truth, and I cannot possibly enlarge upon it here any further. This sense, then, which before was dark, without this Divine light of God, and was blind, because of its desires, is now in such a condition that its deep caverns, by means of this Divine union:

**With strange brightness Give heat and light together to their Beloved!**

67. For, now that these caverns of the faculties are so wonderfully and marvellously infused<sup>4</sup> with the wondrous splendours of those lamps, as we have said, which are burning within them, they are sending back to God in God, over and above the surrender which they are making to God, since they are illumined and enkindled in God, those same splendours which the soul has received with loving glory;<sup>5</sup> they turn to God in God, and become themselves lamps enkindled in the splendours of the Divine lamps, giving to the Beloved some of the

<sup>1</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'and not esteem them. He is an animal man who still lives according to the desires of his nature, for although occasionally these may be connected with spiritual things, yet, if a man desires to cling to them with his natural desire, they then become natural desires; for it is of small importance that the object of this desire should be spiritual, etc.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'but only when the motive is supernatural and God gives such a desire its strength.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p. adds: 'in its manner,' and omits the rest of the sentence.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'placed.' T: 'so greatly mortified and so marvellously infused.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. alters the order of the clauses in this sentence, but makes no other change save the addition of 'of themselves' after 'the surrender.'

same light and heat of love that the soul receives; for in this state, after the same manner as they receive, they are giving to the Giver with the very brightness that He gives to them; even as does glass when the sun strikes it; although the former is after a nobler manner, because the exercise of the will intervenes.

68. 'With strange brightness' signifies that the brightness is strange in a way that is far remote from all common thought and all description and every way and manner.<sup>1</sup> For the brightness with which God visits the soul is like to the brightness wherewith the understanding receives Divine wisdom and is made one with the understanding of God; for one cannot give save in the way wherein is given to him. And like to the brightness<sup>2</sup> wherewith the will is united with goodness<sup>3</sup> is the brightness wherewith the soul gives to God in God the same goodness; for the soul receives it only to give it again. In the same way, according to the brightness wherewith the soul has knowledge of the greatness of God, being united therein, it shines and gives heat of love. According to the brightness of the other Divine attributes which are here communicated to the soul—fortitude, beauty, justice, etc.—are the manners of brightness wherewith the sense, having fruition, is giving to its Beloved, in its Beloved, that same light and heat that it is receiving from its Beloved; for, since in this state it has been made one and the same thing with Him, it is after a certain manner God by participation; for, although this is not so as perfectly as in the next life, the soul is, as we have said, as it were a shadow of God. And in this way, since the soul, by means of this substantial<sup>4</sup> transformation, is the shadow of God, it does in God and through God that which He does through Himself in the soul, in the same way as He does it.<sup>5</sup> For the will of these two is one;<sup>6</sup> and, even as God is giving Himself to the soul with free and gracious will, even so likewise the soul, having a will that is the freer and the more generous in proportion as it has a greater degree of union with God, is giving God in God to God Himself, and thus the gift of the soul to God is true and entire.<sup>7</sup> For in this state the soul truly sees that God belongs to it, and that it possesses Him with

<sup>1</sup> E.p. ends the sentence at 'description.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'wherewith the understanding received Divine wisdom. And like to the brightness.'

<sup>3</sup> T: 'with the will.' E.p.: 'with the Divine will.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits 'substantial.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'in . . . does it.'

<sup>6</sup> C, G, Gr add: 'and the operation of the soul and of God is one.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'a greater degree of union with God in God, is as it were giving to God. God Himself, through that loving complacency which it has for the Divine Being and perfections, and this is a mystical and affective gift of the soul to God.'

hereditary possession, as an adopted child of God,<sup>1</sup> by rightful ownership, through the grace that God gave to it of Himself, and it sees that, since He belongs to it, it may give and communicate Him to whomsoever it desires; and thus it gives Him to its Beloved,<sup>2</sup> Who is the very God that gave Himself to it. And herein the soul pays all that it owes; for, of its own will, it gives as much as it has received with inestimable delight and joy, giving<sup>3</sup> to the Holy Spirit that which is His in a voluntary surrender, that He may be loved as He deserves.

69. And herein is the inestimable delight of the soul: to see that it is giving to God that which is His own and which becomes Him according to His infinite Being. For, although it is true that the soul cannot give God Himself to Himself anew, since He in Himself is ever Himself, yet, in so far as the soul is itself concerned, it gives perfectly and truly,<sup>3</sup> giving all that He had given to it, to pay the debt of love. And this is to give as has been given to it, and God is repaid by that gift of the soul—yet with less than this He cannot be paid. And this He takes with gratitude, as something belonging to the soul that it gives to Him anew,<sup>4</sup> and because of this He loves the soul and surrenders Himself to it anew, wherein the soul loves Him.<sup>5</sup> And so at this time there is a reciprocal love between God and the soul, in the agreement of the union and surrender of marriage, wherein the possessions of both, which are the Divine Being, are possessed by each one freely, and<sup>6</sup> are possessed likewise by both together in the voluntary surrender of each to the other, wherein each says to the other that which the Son of God said to the Father in Saint John, namely: *Omnia mea tua sunt, et tua mea sunt et clarificatus sum in eis.*<sup>7</sup> That is: All My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them. In the next life this happens without any intermission in the fruition thereof. And in this state of union, when the communication between the soul and God takes place in the act and exercise of love, that gift can evidently be made by the soul,<sup>8</sup> although it is greater than its capacity and its being; for it is evident that one who possesses many kingdoms and peoples as his own, although they be much greater in importance than himself, can perfectly well give them to whom he desires.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits 'with hereditary possession.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'gave to it of Himself. It gives Him, then, to its Beloved.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'and wisely.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. has 'in the aforementioned sense' for 'anew.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'He loves the soul'; probably a slip (*al* for *el*).]

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'are possessed by each one freely, and.'

<sup>7</sup> St. John xvii, 10:

<sup>8</sup> [P. Silverio's text has 'to' for 'by'; this is probably a slip (*al* for *el*) similar to 'that' noted in n. 5, above.]

70. This is the great satisfaction and contentment of the soul, to see that it is giving to God more than it is itself worth, since it is giving to God Himself with such great liberality, as that which is its own, with that Divine light and that warmth of love which are given to it; in the next life this comes to pass through the light of glory,<sup>1</sup> and, in this life, through most enlightened faith.<sup>2</sup> And in this way, the deep caverns of sense, with strange brightness, give heat and light together to their Beloved. 'Together,' because the communication of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in the soul are made together, and are the light and fire of love.

71. But here we must make a brief observation on the brightness wherewith the soul makes this surrender. Concerning this it must be noted that, in the act of this union, as the soul enjoys a certain image of fruition which is caused by the union of the understanding and the affection in God, being delighted thereby and constrained, it makes the surrender of God to God, and of itself in God, in wondrous manners. For, with respect to love, the soul presents itself to God with strange brightness; and equally so with respect to this shadow of fruition; and likewise with respect to praise, and, in the same way, with respect to gratitude.

72. With regard to the first of these, which is love, the soul has three principal kinds of love which may be called brightnesses. The first is that the soul now loves God, not through itself, but through God Himself; which is a wondrous brightness, since it loves through the Holy Spirit,<sup>3</sup> even as the Father loves the Son, as Saint John says: 'May the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me,' says the Son to the Father, 'be in them and I in them.'<sup>4</sup> The second kind of brightness is to love God in God; for in this vehement union the soul is absorbed in the love of God and God surrenders Himself to the soul with great vehemence. The third kind of love which is brightness is that the soul here loves Him for Who He is; it loves Him not only because He is bountiful, good, glorious,<sup>5</sup> and so forth, with respect to itself, but much more earnestly because He is all this in Himself essentially.

73. And with regard to this image of fruition there are also three other principal kinds of brightness, no less wonderful. The first is that the soul in this state has fruition of God through God Himself, for as

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'and of love.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'and most enkindled love.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'since it loves enkindled by the Holy Spirit, and having in itself the Holy Spirit.'

<sup>4</sup> St. John xvii, 26.

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'bountiful, good, liberal.' T: 'bountiful, good [*used substantively*], glory.'

the soul in this state unites understanding with wisdom and goodness and so forth,<sup>1</sup> albeit not so clearly as it will do in the next life, it delights greatly in all these things, understood distinctly, as we have said above. The second principal brightness belonging to this love is that the soul delights itself duly in God alone, without any intermingling of creatures. The third delight is that it enjoys Him for Who He is alone, without any other intermingling of its own pleasure.<sup>2</sup>

74. And with respect to the praise which the soul offers to God in this union, there are three kinds of brightness here also. First, the soul praises God as a duty, for it sees that He created it to offer Him praise, as He says through *Isaias*: 'I have formed this people for Myself; it shall sing My praises.'<sup>3</sup> The second kind of brightness of this praise comes from the blessings which the soul receives and the delight that it has in offering praise.<sup>4</sup> The third is that it praises God for that which He is in Himself; even if to do so caused the soul no delight at all, it would still praise Him for Who He is.

75. With respect to gratitude, again, there are three principal kinds of brightness. First, there is gratitude for the natural and spiritual blessings and the benefits which the soul has received. Secondly, there is the great delight which the soul has in praising God, because it is absorbed with great vehemence in this praise. Thirdly, the soul praises God only for that which He is, and this praise is much more profound and delectable.

## STANZA IV

**How gently and lovingly thou awakenest in my bosom,  
Where thou dwellest secretly and alone!  
And in thy sweet breathing, full of blessing and glory, How  
delicately thou inspirest my love!**

## EXPOSITION

**H**ERE the soul turns to its Spouse with great love, extolling Him and giving Him thanks for two wondrous effects which He sometimes produces within it by means of this union, noting likewise in what way He produces each and also the effect upon itself which in each case is the result thereof.

<sup>1</sup> E.p. adds: 'which it knows with such enlightenment.' A, B, C, G, Gr read: 'in omnipotence, wisdom and goodness, and so forth.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'or of anything created.'

<sup>3</sup> *Isaias* xliii, 21.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'in praising this great Lord.'

2. The first effect is the awakening of God in the soul, and the means whereby this is produced are those of gentleness and love. The second effect is the breathing of God in the soul and the means thereof are in the blessing and glory that are communicated to the soul in this breathing. And that which is produced thereby in the soul is a delicate and tender inspiration of love.

3. The stanza, then, has this meaning: Thine awakening, O Word and Spouse, in the centre and depth of my soul, which is its pure and inmost substance,<sup>1</sup> wherein alone, secretly and in silence, Thou dwellest as its Lord, not only as in Thine own house, nor even as in Thine own bed, but intimately and closely united as in mine own bosom—how gentle and how loving is this! That is, it is exceedingly gentle and loving; and in this delectable breathing which in this Thine awakening Thou makest delectable for me, filled as it is with blessing and glory, with what delicacy dost Thou inspire me with love and affection for Thyself! Herein the soul uses a similitude of the breathing of one that awakens from his sleep; for in truth, the soul in this condition feels it to be so. There follows the line:

**How gently and lovingly thou awakenest in my bosom,**

4. There are many ways in which God awakens in the soul: so many that, if we had to enumerate them, we should never end. But this awakening of the Son of God which the soul here desires to describe, is, as I believe, one of the loftiest and one which brings the most good to the soul. For this awakening is a movement of the Word in the substance<sup>2</sup> of the soul, of such greatness and dominion and glory, and of such intimate sweetness, that it seems to the soul that all the balms and perfumed spices and flowers in the world are mingled and shaken and revolved together to give that sweetness; and that all the kingdoms and dominions of the world and all the powers and virtues of Heaven are moved.<sup>3</sup> And not only so, but all the virtues and substances and perfections and graces of all created things shine forth and make the same movement together and in unison. For, as Saint John says, all things in Him are life,<sup>4</sup> and in Him they live and are and move, as the Apostle says likewise.<sup>5</sup> Hence it comes to pass that, when this great Emperor moves in the soul, Whose kingdom, as Isaias

<sup>1</sup> E.p. omits: 'which . . . substance.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'in the depth.'

<sup>3</sup> A, B, T: 'move it.'

<sup>4</sup> St. John i, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xvii, 28.

says, is borne upon His shoulders<sup>1</sup> (namely, the three spheres, the celestial, the terrestrial and the infernal, and the things that are in them; and He sustains them all, as Saint Paul says, in the Word of His power),<sup>2</sup> then all the spheres seem to move together. Just as, when the earth moves, all material things that are upon it move likewise, as if they were nothing, even so,<sup>3</sup> when this Prince moves, He carries His court with Him, and the court carries not Him.

5. Yet this comparison is highly unsuitable, for in this latter case not only do all seem to be moving, but they also reveal the beauties of their being, virtue, loveliness and graces, and the root of their duration and life. For there the soul is able to see how all creatures, above and below,<sup>4</sup> have their life and duration in Him, and it sees clearly that which the Book of Wisdom expresses in these words: 'By Me kings reign, by Me princes rule and the powerful exercise justice and understand it.'<sup>5</sup> And although it is true that the soul is now able to see that these things are distinct from God, inasmuch as they have a created being, and it sees them in Him, with their force, root and strength, it knows equally that God, in His own Being, is all these things, in an infinite and pre-eminent way, to such a point that it understands them better in His Being<sup>6</sup> than in themselves. And this is the great delight of this awakening:<sup>7</sup> to know the creatures through God and not God through the creatures; to know the effects through their cause and not the cause through the effects; for the latter knowledge is secondary and this other is essential.<sup>8</sup>

6. And the manner of this knowledge<sup>9</sup> in the soul, since God is immovable, is a wondrous thing, for, although in reality God moves not,<sup>10</sup> it seems to the soul that He is indeed moving; for, as the soul is renewed and moved by God that it may behold this supernatural sight, and there is revealed to it in this great renewal that Divine life and the being and harmony of every creature in it which has its movements in

<sup>1</sup> Isaias ix, 6. E.p.: 'Hence it comes to pass that, when this great Emperor is pleased to reveal Himself to the soul, moving by means of this manner of enlightenment and yet not moving in the soul, Who bears His kingdom, as Isaias says, upon His shoulder.'

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews i, 3.

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'Just as, if the earth were to move, all natural things that are upon it would move likewise, even so.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'inferior and superior.'

<sup>5</sup> The quotation is from Proverbs viii, 15.

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'in this its beginning.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds here: 'to know the effects through their cause' and omits the remainder of the paragraph.

<sup>8</sup> C omits this and the preceding clause.

<sup>9</sup> E.p.: 'of this movement.'

<sup>10</sup> E.p. omits 'in reality' and continues: 'the soul is renewed and moved by Him, and there is revealed to it in a wondrous renewal that Divine life and the being and harmony of every creature, so that the cause takes the name,' etc.

God, it seems to the soul that it is God that is moving, and thus the cause takes the name of the effect which it produces, according to which effect it may be said that God is moving, even as the Wise Man says: 'Wisdom is more movable than all movable things.'<sup>1</sup> And this is not because it moves itself, but because it is the beginning and root of all movement; remaining in itself stable, as the passage goes on to say, it renews all things. And thus what is here meant is that wisdom is more active than all active things. And thus we should say here that it is the soul that is moved in this motion, and is awakened from the sleep of its natural vision to a supernatural vision,<sup>2</sup> for which reason it is very properly given the name of an awakening.

7. But God, as the soul has been enabled to see, is always moving, ruling and giving being and virtue and grace and gifts to all creatures, containing them all in Himself, virtually, presentially and substantially;<sup>3</sup> so that in one single glance<sup>4</sup> the soul sees that which God is in Himself and that which He is in the creatures. Even so, when a palace is thrown open, a man may see at one and the same time the eminence of the person who is within the palace and also what he is doing. And it is this, as I understand, that happens upon this awakening and glance of the soul. Though the soul is substantially in God, as is every creature,<sup>5</sup> He draws back from before it some of the veils and curtains which are in front of it, so that it may see of what nature He is,<sup>6</sup> and then there is revealed to it, and it is able to see (though somewhat darkly, since not all the veils are drawn back)<sup>7</sup> that face of His<sup>8</sup> that is full of graces. And, since it is moving all things by its power, there appears together with it that which it is doing, and it appears to move in them, and they in it, with continual movement; and for this reason the soul believes that God has moved and awakened, whereas in reality that which has moved and awakened is itself.

8. For such is the lowly nature of this kind of life which we live that we believe others to be as we are ourselves; and we judge others as we are ourselves, so that our judgment begins with<sup>9</sup> ourselves and not outside ourselves. In this way the thief believes that others steal likewise; and he that lusts, that others are lustful like himself; and he that bears malice, that others bear malice, his judgment proceeding from his own malice; and the good man thinks well of others, his

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom vii, 24.

<sup>2</sup> E.p. omits: 'from the sleep . . . supernatural vision.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'and most eminently.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. omits: 'in one single glance.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'Though the soul . . . creature.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'may see what He is.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'for there remains that of faith.'

<sup>8</sup> E.p.: 'that Divine face.'

<sup>9</sup> So T. A, B, C, G, Gr: 'proceeds from and begins with.'

judgment proceeding from the goodness of his own thoughts; and so likewise he that is negligent and slothful<sup>1</sup> thinks that others are the same. And hence, when we are negligent and slothful in the sight of God, we think that it is God Who is slothful and negligent with us, as we read in the forty-third Psalm, where David says to God: 'Arise, Lord, why sleepest Thou?'<sup>2</sup> He attributes to God qualities that are in man; for though it is they that have fallen and are asleep, yet it is God Whom he bids arise and awaken, though He that keepeth Israel never sleeps.

9. But in truth, though every blessing that comes to man is from God,<sup>3</sup> and man, of his own power, can do naught that is good, it is true to say that our awakening is an awakening of God, and our uprising is an uprising of God. And thus it is as though David had said: Raise us up and raise us up again<sup>4</sup> and awaken us, for we are asleep and we have fallen in two ways. Wherefore, since the soul had fallen into a sleep, whence of itself it could never awaken, and it is God alone that has been able to open its eyes and cause this awakening, it very properly describes it as an awakening of God, in these words: 'Thou awakenest in my bosom.' Do Thou awaken us, then, and enlighten us, my Lord, that we may know and love the blessings that Thou hast ever set before us, and we shall know that Thou hast been moved to grant us favours, and that Thou hast been mindful of us.

10. That which the soul knows and feels in this awakening concerning the excellence of God is wholly indescribable,<sup>5</sup> for, since there is a communication of the excellence of God in the substance of the soul, which is that breast of the soul whereof the lines here speak, there is heard in the soul the immense power of the voice of a multitude of excellences, of thousands upon thousands of virtues.<sup>6</sup> In these the soul is entrenched and remains terribly and firmly arrayed among them like ranks of armies and made sweet and gracious in all the sweetnesses and graces of the creatures.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'asleep'; and so also below.]

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xliii, 23 [A.V., xliv, 23].

<sup>3</sup> E.p. abbreviates, from the end of § 7, thus: 'there appears together with it that which it is doing. And this is the awakening of the soul, although furthermore, in truth, though every blessing that comes to man is from God.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'Raise us up twice.']

<sup>5</sup> A, Bz, T, e.p.: 'invisible.'

<sup>6</sup> G, Gr, add: 'of God, which can never be numbered.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p.: 'concerning the excellence of God in the depth of the soul is wholly indescribable. This is the sleep of the soul whereof the lines here speak. There resounds in the soul an immense power, in the voice of a multitude of excellences, of thousands upon thousands of virtues. In these the soul halts and stops, and remains terribly and firmly arrayed like hosts of armies, and made sweet and gracious in that which comprises all the sweetnesses and graces of the creatures.'

11. But this question will be raised: How can the soul bear so violent<sup>1</sup> a communication while in the flesh, when indeed there is no means and strength in it to suffer so greatly and not faint away, since the mere sight of King Assuerus on his throne, in royal apparel and adorned with gold and precious stones,<sup>2</sup> caused Queen Esther such great fear when she saw how terrible he was to behold that she fainted away, as she confesses in that place where she says she fainted away by reason of the fear caused by his great glory, since he seemed to her like an angel and his face was full of graces.<sup>3</sup> For glory oppresses him that looks upon it if it glorifies not. And how much more should the soul faint here, since it is no angel that it sees, but God, Whose face is full of graces<sup>4</sup> of all the creatures and of terrible power and glory and Whose voice is the multitude of His excellences? Concerning this Job enquires, when we have such difficulty in hearing a drop,<sup>5</sup> who shall be able to abide the greatness of His thunder.<sup>6</sup> And elsewhere he says: 'I will not that He contend and treat with me with much strength, lest perchance He oppress me with the weight of His greatness.'<sup>7</sup>

12. But the reason why the soul faints not away and fears not in this awakening which is so powerful and glorious is twofold. First, being, as it now is, in the state of perfection, wherein its lower part is thoroughly purged and conformed with the spirit, it has not the suffering and pain that are wont to be experienced in spiritual communications of spirit and sense when these are not purged and prepared to receive them; although this suffices not to prevent the soul from suffering when it is faced with such greatness and glory; since, although its nature be very pure, yet it will be corrupted because it exceeds nature, even as a physical faculty is corrupted by any sensible thing which exceeds its power,<sup>8</sup> in which sense must be taken that which we quoted from Job. The second reason is the more relevant: it is that which the soul gave in the first line—namely, that God shows Himself gentle and loving. For, just as God shows the soul this greatness and glory in order to comfort and magnify it, just so does He

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'so strong.']

<sup>2</sup> Gr, T: 'precious pearls.'

<sup>3</sup> Esther xv, 16.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'since it is no angel that it knows, but God Himself, the Lord of the angels, Whose face is full of graces.'

<sup>5</sup> Several MSS. have 'particle' [cf. A.V., 'portion']. A reads: 'spark.' E.p. has: 'if we can scarcely hear a whisper thereof, how shall one be able,' etc.

<sup>6</sup> Job xxvi, 14.

<sup>7</sup> Job xxiii, 6.

<sup>8</sup> [This reading is obtained by substituting in the Spanish text *excedente* for *excelente*, a change suggested by P. Gurdon. No other reading seems to make sense of the passage.]

grant it grace so that it receives no suffering, and protect its nature, showing the spirit His greatness, with tenderness and love, without the natural senses perceiving this, so that the soul knows not if it is in the body or out of the body.<sup>1</sup> This may easily be done by that God Who protected Moses with His right hand that he might see His glory.<sup>2</sup> And thus the soul feels the gentleness and lovingness of God proportionately to His power and dominion and greatness, since in God all these things are one and the same. And thus the delight of the soul is strong, and the protection given to it is strong in gentleness and love, so that it may be able to endure the strength of this delight; and thus the soul, far from fainting away, becomes strong and powerful. For, when Esther swooned, this was because the King showed himself to her at first unfavourably; for, as we read in that place, he showed her his burning<sup>3</sup> eyes and the fury of his breast. But when he looked favourably upon her, stretching out his sceptre and touching her with it and embracing her, she returned to herself, for he had said to her that he was her brother and she was not to fear.

13. And thus, when the King of Heaven has shown Himself as a friend to the soul, as its equal<sup>4</sup> and its brother, the soul is no longer afraid. For when, in gentleness and not in wrath, He shows to it the strength of His power and the love of His goodness, He communicates to it the strength and love of His breast, and comes out to it from the throne (which is the soul<sup>5</sup>), even as a spouse from his bridal chamber where he was hidden. He inclines to the soul, touches it with the sceptre of His majesty and embraces it as a brother. The soul beholds the royal apparel and perceives its fragrance—namely, the wondrous virtues of God; it observes the splendour of gold, which is charity; it sees the glittering of the precious stones, which are knowledge of created substances, both higher and lower;<sup>6</sup> it looks upon the face of the Word, which is full of graces that strike this queen (which is the soul) and likewise clothe her, so that she is transformed in these virtues of the King of Heaven and sees herself a queen indeed, and says of herself truly that which David says in the forty-fourth Psalm, namely: 'The queen stood at Thy right hand in apparel of

<sup>1</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'and prepared to receive them. The second and more important reason is that which is given in the first line—namely, that God shows Himself gentle and loving. For, just as He shows the soul this greatness and glory in order to comfort and magnify it, just so does He grant it grace and strength, and protect its nature, showing His greatness to the spirit with tenderness and love.'

<sup>2</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 22.

<sup>4</sup> E.p.: 'as its Spouse.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p.: 'which are supernatural knowledge.'

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'burning and enkindled.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p. omits: 'which is the soul.'

gold and surrounded with variety.<sup>1</sup> And, since all this comes to pass in the inmost substance of the soul, it adds next:

**Where thou dwellest secretly and alone!**

14. The soul says that He dwells secretly in its breast, because, as we have said, this sweet embrace is made in the depth of the substance of the soul.<sup>2</sup> That is to say that God dwells secretly in all souls<sup>3</sup> and is hidden in their substance; for, were this not so, they would be unable to exist. But there is a difference between these two manners of dwelling, and a great one. For in some He dwells alone, and in others He dwells not alone; in some He dwells contented<sup>4</sup> and in others He dwells displeased; in some He dwells as in His house, ordering it and ruling everything, while in others He dwells as a stranger in the house of another, where He is not allowed to do anything or to give any commands. Where He dwells with the greatest content and most completely alone is in the soul wherein dwell fewest desires and pleasures of its own; here He is in His own house and rules and governs it. And the more completely alone does He dwell in the soul, the more secretly He dwells; and thus in this soul wherein dwells no desire neither any other image or form of aught that is created, He dwells most secretly, with the more intimate, more interior and closer embrace, according as the soul, as we say, is the more purely and completely withdrawn from all save God. And thus He dwells secretly, since the devil cannot attain to this place and to this embrace, neither can any understanding attain<sup>5</sup> to a knowledge of the manner thereof. But He dwells not secretly with respect to the soul which is in this state of perfection, for it ever perceives that He is within it. Only when the Beloved causes these awakenings to take place does it seem to the soul that He Who aforetime was asleep in its bosom is awakening; and, although it felt and enjoyed His presence, it was as if the Beloved were asleep in its bosom;<sup>6</sup> and the understanding and love of two persons cannot be mutually communicated until both have awakened.<sup>7</sup>

15. Oh, how happy is this soul that is ever conscious of God reposing and resting within its breast! Oh, how well is it that it should withdraw from all things, flee from business and live in boundless

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xlv, 10 [A.V., xlv, 9].

<sup>2</sup> E.p. adds: 'and its faculties.'

<sup>3</sup> C adds: 'as absolute lord of them.'

<sup>4</sup> E.p. abbreviates: 'But there is a difference between these two manners of dwelling; for in some He dwells contented.'

<sup>5</sup> E.p.: 'well attain.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. ends the paragraph here.

<sup>7</sup> C: 'for when one of two persons is asleep, the understanding of both cannot be mutually communicated until both are awake.'

tranquillity, lest anything, however small,<sup>1</sup> should disturb or move the bosom<sup>2</sup> of the Beloved within it. He is there, habitually, as it were, asleep in this embrace with the substance of the soul;<sup>3</sup> and of this the soul is quite conscious, and habitually has full fruition,<sup>4</sup> for, if He were forever awake within it, what would this state be like? Knowledge and love would be forever communicated to the soul, and it would be living in glory. For, if one single awakening of God within the soul, and one glance from His eye, set it in such bliss, as we have said, what would its condition be if He were habitually awake<sup>5</sup> within it?

16. In other souls, that have not attained to this union, He dwells secretly likewise; and He is not displeased, because they are not yet perfectly prepared for union. Such souls are not as a rule conscious of His presence save when He effects certain delectable awakenings within them, but these are not of the same kind as that other awakening, nor have they aught to do with it. This awakening is not so secret from the devil, or from the understanding, as that other, for something can always be understood concerning it by means of the movements of sense, inasmuch as sense is not completely annihilated until the soul attains to union, but still preserves certain actions pertaining to the spiritual element,<sup>6</sup> for it is not yet wholly spiritualized. But in this awakening which the Spouse effects in this perfect soul, everything is perfect; for it is He that is its sole cause.<sup>7</sup> Thus, in that inspiration and awakening, which is as if a man awakened and breathed, the soul is conscious of the breathing of God, wherefore it says:

**And in thy sweet breathing, full of blessing and glory, How  
delicately thou inspirest my love!**

17. Of that breathing of God I should not wish to speak, neither do I desire now to speak; for I see clearly that I cannot say aught concerning it, and that, were I to speak of it, it would seem less<sup>8</sup> than it is. For it is a breathing of God Himself,<sup>9</sup> wherein, in that awakening of lofty knowledge of the Deity, the Holy Spirit breathes into the soul in proportion to the knowledge<sup>10</sup> wherein He most profoundly absorbs

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'lest a speck.']

<sup>2</sup> A: 'or renew the sleep' [*renueva el sueño for renueva el seno*].

<sup>3</sup> E.p.: 'with the soul.'

<sup>4</sup> C adds: 'of His awakenings, though not always.'

<sup>5</sup> A, T: 'habitually disposed.'

<sup>6</sup> E.p. omits: 'pertaining to the spiritual element.' C has 'sensual' for 'spiritual.'

<sup>7</sup> E.p. adds: 'in the sense mentioned above.'

<sup>8</sup> C: 'much less.'

<sup>9</sup> E.p. adds: 'to the soul.'

<sup>10</sup> C: 'to the intelligence and knowledge.'

it in the Holy Spirit, inspiring it with most delicate love for Himself according to that which it has seen; for, the soul being<sup>1</sup> full of blessing and glory, the Holy Spirit has filled it with goodness and glory, wherein He has inspired it with a love for Himself which transcends all description and all sense, in the deep things of God. And for that reason I leave speaking of it here.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bz, C, Gr, e.p.: 'for, His breathing being.'

<sup>2</sup> E.p.: 'wherein He inspires it with a love for Himself which transcends all glory and all sense, and for that reason I leave speaking of it.'

# LIVING FLAME OF LOVE

(SECOND REDACTION)

*Exposition of the stanzas which treat of the most intimate and perfected union and transformation of the soul in God, written by P. Fray John of the Cross, Discalced Carmelite, at the request of Doña Ana de Peñalosa and composed in prayer by their author in the year 1584.*<sup>1</sup>

## PROLOGUE

I HAVE felt some unwillingness, most noble and devout lady, to expound these four stanzas which you have requested me to explain, for they relate to things so interior and spiritual that words commonly fail to describe them, since spirit transcends sense and it is with difficulty that anything can be said of the substance of the spirit<sup>2</sup> if one have not deep spirituality. Wherefore, having little thereof myself, I have delayed writing until now, when it appears that the Lord has opened knowledge somewhat to me and given me some fervour (which must arise from your devout desire, for perhaps, as these words have been written for you,<sup>3</sup> His Majesty desires them to be expounded for you). So I have taken courage, knowing for certain that out of my own resources I can say naught that is of any value, especially in things of such sublimity and substance. Wherefore my part herein will be limited to the defects and errors that this book may contain, for which reason I submit it all to the better judgment and understanding of our holy<sup>4</sup> Mother the Roman Catholic Church, with whose guidance no man goes astray. And, with this preamble, relying upon Divine Scripture, and making clear that all which is said herein is as far removed from all that there is to say as is a picture from a living person, I shall make bold to say that which I know.

2. And there is no reason for marvelling that God should grant

<sup>1</sup> So S, with which are practically identical Bg and P. C omits the title, beginning with the word 'Prologue.' Bz begins: 'Stanzas made by the soul in the final union with God made and commented by Father Fray John of the Cross.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P omit: 'of the spirit.' Bz, C read as in the first redaction.

<sup>3</sup> S: 'for your devotion.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz, S omit: 'holy.'

such high<sup>1</sup> and rare favours<sup>2</sup> to those souls on whom He bestows consolations. For if we consider that He is God, and that He bestows them as God, with infinite love and goodness, it will not seem to us unreasonable. For God said that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit would come to him that loved Him and make their abode in him,<sup>3</sup> and this would come to pass by His making him live and dwell in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the life of God, as the soul explains in these stanzas.

3. For although in the stanzas which we expounded above we spoke of the most perfect degree of perfection<sup>4</sup> to which a man may attain in this life, which is transformation in God, nevertheless these stanzas treat of a love which is even more completed and perfected within this same state of transformation. For, although it is true that both those stanzas and these speak of a state of transformation beyond which, as such, a soul cannot pass, yet none the less, with time and practice, as I say, the soul may become more completely perfected and grounded in love. Even so, when a log of wood has been set upon the fire, it is transformed into fire and united with it;<sup>5</sup> yet, as the fire grows hotter and the wood remains upon it for a longer time, it glows much more and becomes more completely enkindled, until it gives out sparks of fire and flame.

4. And it is of this degree of enkindled love that the soul must be understood as speaking when it is at last so far transformed and perfected interiorly in the fire of love<sup>6</sup> that not only is it united with this fire but it has now become one living flame within it. Such the soul feels itself to be, and as such it speaks in these stanzas, with an intimate and delicate sweetness of love, burning in the flame thereof, and extolling in these stanzas certain effects thereof which are wrought in itself. These I shall expound in the same order as with the other stanzas, setting them down first all together, then setting down each stanza and expounding it briefly, and finally setting down each line and expounding it by itself alone.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'such high and sublime.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'such high and rare marvels and favours.'

<sup>3</sup> St. John xiv, 23.

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: 'and consumed in it.'

<sup>4</sup> C: 'of prayer and perfection.'

<sup>6</sup> C: 'of Divine love.'

<sup>7</sup> C: 'and finally expounding each verse by itself alone.' S adds: 'Fray John of the Cross, Discalced Carmelite.' C adds: 'Fray John of the †. Soli Deo honor et gloria. Amen.'

STANZAS MADE BY THE SOUL  
IN THE INTIMATE UNION OF GOD<sup>1</sup>

1. Oh, living flame of love That tenderly woundest my soul in  
its deepest centre,<sup>2</sup>  
Since thou art no longer oppressive, perfect me now if it be  
thy will, Break the web of this sweet encounter.
2. Oh, sweet burn!<sup>3</sup> Oh, delectable wound! Oh, soft hand!  
Oh, delicate touch  
That savours of eternal life and pays every debt! In slaying,  
thou hast changed death into life.
3. Oh, lamps of fire, In whose splendours the deep caverns of  
sense which were dark and blind  
With strange brightness Give heat and light together to their  
Beloved!
4. How gently and lovingly thou awakenest in my bosom,  
Where thou dwellest secretly and alone!  
And in thy sweet breathing, full of blessing and glory, How  
delicately thou inspirest my love!<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S adds: 'its Beloved Spouse.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz, P: 'That tenderly woundest the deepest centre of my soul.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'Oh, sweet captivity!' [*cautiverio* for *cauterio*].

<sup>4</sup> The MSS. here add the note which will be found above as note 2 on p. 16.

## STANZA THE FIRST

**Oh, living flame of love That tenderly woundest my soul in its  
deepest centre,<sup>1</sup>  
Since thou art no longer oppressive, perfect me now if it be thy  
will, Break the web of this sweet encounter.**

### EXPOSITION

**T**HE soul feels itself to be at last wholly enkindled in Divine union, and its palate to be wholly bathed in glory and love, and from the very inmost part<sup>2</sup> of its substance to be flowing veritable rivers of glory, abounding in delights, for it perceives that from its belly are flowing the rivers of living water which the Son of God said would flow from such souls.<sup>3</sup> It seems to this soul that, since it is transformed in God with such vehemence and is in so lofty a way possessed of Him, and is adorned with such a marvellous wealth of gifts and virtues, it is very near to bliss, from which it is divided only by a slender web. And, seeing that that delicate flame of love that burns within it is, as it were, glorifying it with a glory both gentle and powerful whensoever it assails it, to such a degree that, whensoever it is absorbed and assailed, it believes that it is about to enter upon eternal life<sup>4</sup> and that this web of mortal life will be broken, and that there remains but a very short space of time, yet during this space it cannot be perfectly glorified in its essence, the soul addresses this flame, which is the Holy Spirit, with great yearning, begging Him now to break this its mortal life in that sweet encounter, so that of a truth He may communicate to it perfectly that which it believes Him to be about to give to it whensoever He meets it—namely, complete and perfect glory. And thus the soul says:

### **Oh, living flame of love**

2. In order to extol the fervour and delight wherewith it speaks in

<sup>1</sup> P: 'That tenderly woundest the deepest centre of my soul!'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, C, P: 'from the very last part.'

<sup>3</sup> St. John vii, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: 'eternal life and glory.'

these four stanzas, the soul begins each of them with the word 'Oh' or 'How,' which words signify affectionate exultation. Each time that they are used they show that something is passing within the soul beyond that which can be expressed by the tongue. And the word 'Oh' serves also to express a deep yearning and earnest supplication with the aim of persuasion; for both these reasons the soul uses that word in this stanza, intimating and extolling its great desire, and endeavouring to persuade love to set it free.<sup>1</sup>

3. This flame of love is the Spirit of its Spouse—that is, the Holy Spirit. And this flame the soul feels within it, not only as a fire that has consumed and transformed it in sweet love, but also as a fire which burns within it and sends out flame, as I have said, and that flame, each time that it breaks forth, bathes the soul in glory and refreshes it with the temper of Divine life. And this is the operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul that is transformed in love, that the acts that He performs within it cause it to send out flames, which are the enkindling of love, wherein the will of the soul is united, and it loves most deeply, being made one with that flame in love. And thus these acts of love of the soul are most precious,<sup>2</sup> and even one of them is of greater merit and worth than all that the soul has done in its life apart from this transformation, however much this may be. Like to the difference that exists between a habit and an act is that which exists between transformation in love and the flame of love; it is the same difference as that between the log of wood that is enkindled and the flame which it sends forth, for the flame is the effect of the fire that burns there.

4. Wherefore it may be said that the soul that is in this state of transformation of love is in its ordinary habit, and that it is like to the log of wood that is continually assailed by the fire; and the acts of this soul are the flame that arises from the fire of love: the more intense is the fire of union, the more vehemently does its flame issue forth. In this flame the acts of the will are united and rise upward, being carried away and absorbed in the flame of the Holy Spirit, even as the angel rose upward to God in the flame of the sacrifice of Manue.<sup>3</sup> In this state, therefore, the soul can perform no acts, but it is the Holy Spirit that performs them and moves it to perform them; wherefore all its acts are Divine, since it is impelled and moved to them by God. Hence it seems to the soul that whensoever this flame breaks forth, causing it to

<sup>1</sup> Bz: 'to desire it.' Bg, P read as in the text, but add: 'from mortal flesh.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'most pure.'

<sup>3</sup> Judges xiii, 20.

love with the Divine temper and sweetness, it is granting it eternal life, since it raises it to the operation of God in God.

5. This is the language used by God when He speaks to souls that are purified and clean: words wholly enkindled,<sup>1</sup> even as David said: 'Thy word is vehemently enkindled.'<sup>2</sup> And the Prophet asked: 'Are not my words as a fire?'<sup>3</sup> These words, as God Himself says, through Saint John, are spirit and life,<sup>4</sup> and are felt to be such by souls that have ears to hear them, who, as I say, are souls that are pure and enkindled with love. But those that have not a healthy palate,<sup>5</sup> and desire other things, cannot relish the spirit and life that these words contain, but rather find insipidity in them. For this reason, the loftier were the words spoken by the Son of God, the more they displeased certain persons because of these persons' impurity, as when the Lord preached that sweet<sup>6</sup> and loving doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, and many of His hearers turned back.<sup>7</sup>

6. Because such persons are not attracted by this language of God, which He speaks inwardly, they must not think that others will not be attracted by it. On the occasion here mentioned it greatly attracted Saint Peter, so that he said to Christ: 'Lord, whither shall we go, for Thou hast the words of eternal life?'<sup>8</sup> And the Samaritan woman forgot her water and her pitcher, because of the sweetness of the words of God. And thus, when this soul is so near to God that it is transformed in the flame of love, wherein the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit communicate Themselves to it, how is it a thing incredible that it should be said to enjoy a foretaste of eternal life, though this cannot be perfectly so, since that is not permitted by the conditions of this life? But the delight caused in the soul by that flaming of the Holy Spirit is so sublime that it teaches the soul what is the savour of eternal life. For that reason it speaks of the flame as living; not that it is not always living, but because its effect is to make the soul live spiritually in God, and experience<sup>9</sup> the life of God, even as David says: 'My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God.'<sup>10</sup> There was no necessity for him to use the word 'living,'<sup>11</sup> since God is ever living; he uses it to show that spirit and sense had a living experience

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'these words are wholly enkindled.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxviii, 140. [*Ignitum eloquium tuum vehementer.*]

<sup>3</sup> Jeremias xxiii, 29.

<sup>5</sup> Bg, P: 'that keep not their palate clean.'

<sup>7</sup> [St. John vi, 67.]

<sup>9</sup> Bg, P: 'and live.'

<sup>10</sup> Psalm lxxxiii, 3 [A.V., lxxxiv, 2].

<sup>11</sup> Bg, P: 'to use the words "living God."''

<sup>4</sup> St. John vi, 64.

<sup>6</sup> S: 'that sovereign.'

<sup>8</sup> St. John vi, 69.

of God, being wrought in God<sup>1</sup>—which is to have experience<sup>2</sup> of the living God, that is to say, the life of God and life eternal. David spoke in that passage of the living God because he had had experience of Him in a living manner, albeit not perfectly, but he had had, as it were, a foretaste of eternal life. And thus in this flame the soul has so living<sup>3</sup> a perception of God and experiences Him with such great sweetness and delight that it says: 'Oh, living flame of love!'

### That tenderly woundest

7. That is, that touchest me tenderly with Thy heat. For, inasmuch as this flame is a flame of Divine life, it wounds the soul with the tenderness of the life of God; and so deeply and profoundly does it wound it and fill it with tenderness that it causes it to melt in love, so that there may be fulfilled in it that which came to pass to the Bride in the Song of Songs. She conceived such great tenderness that she melted away, wherefore she says in that place: 'When the Spouse spake, my soul melted.'<sup>4</sup> For this is the effect that the speaking of God causes in the soul.

8. But how can we say that this flame wounds the soul, when there is nothing in the soul to be wounded, since it is wholly consumed<sup>5</sup> by the fire of love? It is a marvellous thing: for, as love is never idle, but is continually in movement, it is ever throwing out sparks, like a flame, in every direction; and, as the office of love is to wound, that it may enkindle with love and cause delight, so, when it is, as it were, a living flame within the soul, it is ever sending forth its arrow-wounds, like most tender sparks of delicate love, joyfully and happily exercising the arts and playings of love. Even so, in his palace,<sup>6</sup> at his marriage, did Assuerus show forth his graces to Esther his bride,<sup>7</sup> revealing to her there his riches and the glory of his greatness.<sup>8</sup> Thus that which the Wise Man said in the Proverbs is now fulfilled in this soul, namely: 'I was delighted every day as I played<sup>9</sup> before him at all times, playing over all lands, and my delight is to be with the children of men, namely, by giving myself to them.'<sup>10</sup> Wherefore these wounds, which are the playing<sup>11</sup> of God, are the sparks of these tender touches of flame which touch the soul intermittently and proceed from the fire of

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'being made living in God.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'has so certain.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P: 'wholly captivated and consumed.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: 'in the palace of his love.'

<sup>5</sup> C: 'his fairest bride.'

<sup>6</sup> Bz: 'We were delighted every day as we played.'

<sup>7</sup> Bg, P: 'the fires' [*fuegos* for *juegos*].

<sup>2</sup> [Cf. p. 20, n. 3, above.]

<sup>4</sup> Canticles v. 6.

<sup>8</sup> [Esther ii, 17-18.]

<sup>10</sup> Proverbs viii, 30-1.

love, which is not idle, but whose flames, says the stanza, strike and wound

### **My soul in its deepest centre,**

9. For this feast of the Holy Spirit takes place in the substance of the soul, where neither the devil nor the world nor sense can enter;<sup>1</sup> and therefore the more interior<sup>2</sup> it is, the more is it secure, substantial and delectable; for the more interior it is, the purer is it, and the more of purity there is in it, the more abundantly and frequently and widely does God communicate Himself. And thus the delight and rejoicing of the soul and the spirit is the greater herein because it is God that works all this and the soul of its own power does naught therein; for the soul can do naught of itself, save through the bodily senses and by their help, from which in this case the soul is very free and very far removed, its only business being the reception of God, Who alone can work in the depth<sup>3</sup> of the soul, without the aid of the senses, and can move the soul therein. And thus all the movements of such a soul are Divine; and, although they come from Him, they belong to the soul likewise, for God works them in the soul, with its own aid, since it gives its will and consent thereto. And, since to say that He wounds the soul in its deepest centre is to imply that the soul has other centres which are less profound,<sup>4</sup> it is necessary to explain in what way this is so.

10. In the first place, it must be known that the soul, inasmuch as it is spirit, has neither height nor depth, neither greater nor lesser degrees of profundity in its own being, as have bodies that can be measured. For, since there are no parts in the soul, there is no difference between its inward and its outward being; it is all the same, and it has no depths of greater or lesser profundity of a kind that can be measured; for it cannot be more enlightened in one part than in another, as is the case with physical bodies, but the whole of it is enlightened in one manner, either to a greater or to a lesser degree, in the same way as the air is enlightened or unenlightened,<sup>5</sup> to a greater or a lesser degree.

11. We term the deepest centre of a thing the farthest point to which its being and virtue and the force of its operation and movement can attain, and beyond which they cannot pass. Thus fire and a stone have

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'where neither sense enters nor can the devil attain.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'the more delectable and interior.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P: 'in the depth and inmost part.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz, C, S: 'other and profounder centres.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz omits: 'or unenlightened.'

natural movement and power, and strength to reach the centre of their sphere, and cannot pass beyond it, neither can help reaching it and remaining in it, save by reason of some contrary and violent impediment. Accordingly, we shall say that a stone, when in some way it is within the earth, is in some way in its centre, and this although it be not in the deepest part of the earth, because it is within the sphere of its centre and activity and movement; but we shall not say that it is in its deepest centre, which is the middle of the earth, and therefore it still has power and force and inclination to descend and to attain to this farthest and deepest centre if that which impedes it be taken away; and when it attains to its centre and there remains to it no more power and inclination of its own to move farther, we shall say that it is in its deepest centre.

12. The centre of the soul is God; and, when the soul has attained to Him according to the whole capacity<sup>1</sup> of its being, and according to the force of its operation and inclination, it will have reached its last and deepest centre in God, which will be when with all its powers it understands and loves and enjoys God; and, so long as it has not attained as far as this, as is the case in this mortal life, wherein the soul cannot attain to God with all its powers,<sup>2</sup> then, although it be in this its centre, which is God, by grace and by His own communication which He has with it, still, inasmuch as it has the power of movement and strength to go farther, and is not satisfied, then, although it may be in the centre,<sup>3</sup> it is nevertheless not in the deepest centre, since it is capable of going to the deepest centre of God.<sup>4</sup>

13. It is to be observed, then, that love is the inclination of the soul and the strength and power which it has to go to God, for, by means of love, the soul is united with God; and thus, the more degrees of love the soul has, the more profoundly does it enter into God and the more is it centred in Him. Therefore we can say that, as are the degrees of the love of God of which the soul is capable, so are the centres of which it is capable in God, each one being more interior than another; for the strongest love is the most unitive love,<sup>5</sup> and in this sense we may understand the many mansions which, said the Son of God, were in His Father's house.<sup>6</sup> So that, for the soul to be in its centre, which is God, as we have said, it suffices for it to have one degree of love, since with one degree alone it may be united with Him through grace. If it

<sup>1</sup> P: 'according to the quality.'

<sup>2</sup> C: 'although it is satisfied.'

<sup>3</sup> C: 'the most vital love.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz omits: 'with all its powers.'

<sup>4</sup> S: 'the deepest centre in God.'

<sup>6</sup> St. John xiv, 2.

have two degrees of love, it will be united and have entered into another and a more interior centre<sup>1</sup> with God; and, if it attain to three, it will have entered into the third; and, if it attain to the last degree, the love of God will succeed in wounding the soul even in its remotest and deepest centre—that is, in transforming and enlightening it as regards all its being and power and virtue, such as it is capable of receiving, until it be brought into such a state that it appears to be God. In this state it is as when the crystal that is clear and pure is assailed by the light; the more degrees of light it receives, the greater concentration of light there is in it, and the greater is its enlightenment. And the copiousness of light may reach such a point that it comes to appear to be wholly light, and cannot be distinguished from the light; being enlightened to the greatest possible extent, it appears to be light itself.<sup>2</sup>

14. And thus, when the soul says here that the flame of love wounds it in its deepest centre, it means that the Holy Spirit wounds and assails it in the farthest point attained by its own substance, virtue and power. This it says, not because it desires to indicate here that this flame wounds it as substantially and completely as it will do in the beatific vision of God in the life to come, for, although in this mortal life the soul may reach as high a state of perfection as that whereof we are speaking, it reaches not the perfect state of glory, nor can it do so, although peradventure it may happen that God will grant it such a favour fleetingly. But it says this to indicate the copiousness and abundance of delight and glory of which it is conscious in this kind of communication in the Holy Spirit. This delight is the greater and the more tender when the soul is the more fervently and substantially transformed and centred in God; and this, being the maximum to which the soul can attain in this life (though, as we say, not as perfectly as in the life to come), is called the deepest centre. It is true that the habit of charity in the soul may be as perfect in this life as in the next, but neither its operation nor its fruit can be so, although the fruit and the operation of love grow in this state to such an extent that they become very much like those of the life to come; so much so that to the soul it appears that they are so and it ventures to use those words which one ventures to use only of the next life, namely: 'in the deepest centre of my soul.'

15. And since rare occurrences, of which few have had experience,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C: 'degree.'

<sup>2</sup> C abbreviates: 'to appear to be wholly light, and there is no kind of distinction between it and the light, but all appears to be light.'

<sup>3</sup> C: 'have had knowledge.'

are the more marvellous and the less credible, as is that which we are describing as happening to the soul in this state, I do not doubt that certain persons, who understand it not through their learning neither know it by experience,<sup>1</sup> will either disbelieve it or will consider it to be exaggerated, or will think that it is not in itself as great a thing as it is. But to all these I reply that the Father of lights, Whose hand is not shortened and Who, like the sun's ray, sheds His blessings abundantly without respect of persons, wheresoever there is cause, showing Himself likewise joyfully to men as they walk in the roads and paths, hesitates not, neither disdains, to have His delights in common<sup>2</sup> with the sons of men all over the round earth. And it must not be held incredible that in a faithful soul which has already been tried and proved and purged in the fire of tribulations and trials and various temptations, and found faithful in love, there should be fulfilled that which was promised by the Son of God—namely that, if any man loved Him, the Holy Spirit would come within him and would abide and dwell in him.<sup>3</sup> And this comes to pass when the understanding is divinely illumined in the wisdom of the Son, and the will is made glad in the Holy Spirit, and the Father, with His power and strength, absorbs the soul in the embrace and abyss of His sweetness.<sup>4</sup>

16. And if, as is truly the case, this habitually comes to pass in certain souls, it is credible that such a soul as that whereof we are speaking will not be backward in receiving these favours from God. For that which we are describing as coming to pass in it, through the operation of the Holy Spirit which He brings about in it, is much greater than that which comes to pass in the communication and transformation of love. For the one is like a burning coal; but the other, as we have said, is like a coal heated with such fervency<sup>5</sup> that it not only burns, but gives forth living flame. And thus these two kinds of union—that is, of union alone, and of love and union with enkindling of love—are in a certain way comparable respectively to the fire of God which, says Isaias, is in Sion, and to the furnace of God which is in Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup> The one signifies the Church Militant, wherein the fire of charity is enkindled to no extreme degree; and the other signifies the vision of peace, which is the Church Triumphant, where this fire is as in a furnace enkindled in perfection of love. Although, as we said, this

<sup>1</sup> S omits 'not' and has 'and' for 'neither.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz omits 'in common.'

<sup>3</sup> St. John xiv, 23.

<sup>4</sup> So C, S. Bz: 'in the delectable embrace of His sweetness.' Bg, P: 'in the embrace of His sweetness.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz: 'a coal which will absorb so much fire.'

<sup>6</sup> Isaias xxxi, 9.

soul has not attained to such perfection as this, yet, in comparison with the other and common union, it is like a furnace enkindled, and its vision is as much more peaceful and glorious and tender as the flame is brighter and more resplendent than that of a burning coal.

17. Therefore, when the soul feels that this living flame of love is communicating all blessings to it after a living manner, because this Divine love brings everything with it, it says: 'Oh, living flame of love, that tenderly woundest.' This is as though it were to say: Oh, love enkindled, that with thy loving movements art delectably glorifying me according to the capacity and power of my soul—that is to say, art giving me Divine intelligence according to the ability and capacity of my understanding, and communicating love to me according to the utmost power of my will, and delighting me in the substance of the soul with the torrent of thy delight, in thy Divine contact and substantial union, according to the greater purity of my substance and the capacity and freedom of my memory. This comes to pass, and in a greater degree than it is possible for the soul to describe, at the time when this flame of love uprises in it. Inasmuch as the soul has been well purged<sup>1</sup> with respect to its substance and to its faculties—memory, understanding and will—the Divine Substance,<sup>2</sup> which, as the Wise Man says, toucheth all things by reason of its purity,<sup>3</sup> absorbs it in a profound and subtle and sublime manner; and in that absorption of the soul in wisdom, the Holy Spirit brings to pass the glorious vibrations of His flame;<sup>4</sup> and, since it is so sweet, the soul then says:

**Since thou art no longer oppressive,<sup>5</sup>**

18. That is to say, since thou dost no longer afflict or oppress or weary as thou didst aforetime. For it must be known that this flame, which is God,<sup>6</sup> when the soul was in the state of spiritual purgation—that is, when it was entering upon contemplation—was not as friendly and sweet to it as it now is in this state of union. And we must tarry here for some time in order to explain how this comes to pass.

19. Here it must be known that, before this Divine fire of love is introduced into the substance of the soul, and is united with it, by means of a purity and purgation which is perfect and complete, this flame, which is the Holy Spirit, is wounding the soul, and destroying and consuming in it the imperfections of its evil habits; and this is the

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P add: 'and made pure.'

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom vii, 24.

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. p. 24, n. 6, above.]

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: 'the Divine Wisdom.'

<sup>5</sup> C: 'of His soul' [*alma for llama*].

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 8, above.

operation of the Holy Spirit, wherein He prepares it for Divine union<sup>1</sup> and the transformation of love in God. For it must be known that the same fire of love which afterwards is united with the soul and glorifies it is that which aforetime assailed it in order to purge it; even as the fire that penetrates the log of wood is the same that first of all attacked and wounded it with its flame, cleansing and stripping it of its accidents of ugliness,<sup>2</sup> until, by means of its heat, it had prepared it to such a degree that it could enter it and transform it into itself, which is what spiritual persons call the Purgative Way. In this operation the soul endures great suffering and experiences grievous afflictions in its spirit, which habitually overflow into the senses, at which times this flame is very oppressive. For in this preparatory state of purgation the flame is not bright to it, but dark, and if it gives it any light at all, it is only that it may see and feel its own faults and miseries. Neither is it sweet to it, but grievous; for, although at times it kindles within it the heat of love, this is accompanied by torment and affliction. And it is not delectable to it, but arid; for, although at times, through its benignity, it gives the soul a certain amount of comfort which will strengthen and encourage it, yet, both before and after this happens, it compensates and recompenses it with further trials. Nor does it bring it either refreshment or peace, but consumes and proves it, making it to faint and grieve at its own self-knowledge. And thus it is not glorious to it; rather it makes it miserable and bitter, by means of the spiritual light of self-knowledge which it sheds upon it;<sup>3</sup> for God sends fire, as Jeremias says, into its bones, and instructs it, and, as David says likewise, tries it by fire.

20. And thus at this time the soul suffers great darkness with respect to the understanding, great aridities and afflictions with respect to the will, and grievous knowledge of its miseries in the memory, inasmuch as its spiritual eye is very bright with respect to self-knowledge. And in its substance the soul suffers from abandonment and the greatest<sup>4</sup> poverty. Dry and cold, and at times hot, it finds relief in naught, nor is there any thought<sup>5</sup> that can console it, nor can it even raise its heart to God, since this flame has become so oppressive to it. Even so, says Job, did God treat him in this operation, where he says: 'Thou art changed to be cruel to me.'<sup>6</sup> For, when the soul suffers all these things

<sup>1</sup> S: 'for due union.'

<sup>2</sup> [Lit., 'its ugly accidents.'] C: 'its cold accidents' [*fríos* for *faos*].

<sup>3</sup> Bz omits: 'by means . . . sheds-upon it.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: 'the profoundest.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz, C: 'a thought.'

<sup>6</sup> Job xxx, 21.

together, it seems to it in truth that God has become cruel to it and bitter.<sup>1</sup>

21. The sufferings of the soul at this time are indescribable: they are, indeed, very little less than those of purgatory.<sup>2</sup> I can think now of no way to describe this state of oppression, to explain how great it is and to show what an extreme is reached by that which the soul feels and suffers in it, save by using these words of Jeremias which refer to it: 'I am the man that see my poverty by the rod of His indignation; He hath threatened me and brought me into darkness and not into light; so greatly is He turned against me and turneth His hand. My skin and my flesh He hath made old: He hath broken my bones. He hath surrounded me round about and hath compassed me with gall and labour. He hath set me in dark places as those that are dead for ever. He hath builded against me round about, that I may not get out. He hath made my imprisonment heavy; yea, and when I have lifted up my voice and cried, He hath shut out my prayer. He hath obstructed my ways with square stones and hath turned my steps and my paths upside down.'<sup>3</sup> All this says Jeremias; and he continues at much greater length. Now, inasmuch as in this way God is remedying and curing the soul in its many infirmities that He may bring it health, the soul must needs suffer in this purgation and remedy according to the nature of its sickness. For here, as it were, Tobias lays its heart upon the coals,<sup>4</sup> so that every kind of evil spirit is set free and driven away from it; and thus all its infirmities are here continually brought to light, and, being set before its eyes, are felt by it and cured.

22. And the weaknesses and miseries which the soul had aforetime hidden and set deep within it (which aforetime it neither saw nor felt) are now seen and felt by it, by means of the light and heat of the Divine fire, just as the humidity which was in the wood was not realized until the fire attacked it, and made it sweat and smoke and steam, as the imperfect soul does when it is brought near to this flame. For at this season—oh, wondrous thing!—there arise within the soul contraries against contraries, the things of the soul against the things of God, which assail the soul; and some of these, as the philosophers say, become visible in reacting to others, and they make war in the soul, striving to expel each other in order that they may reign within it. That is to say, the virtues and properties of God, which are perfect

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'and tasteless.']

<sup>2</sup> So Bz, C. The other authorities have 'of a purgatory.' Bg, P read: 'sometimes' for 'indeed.'

<sup>3</sup> Lamentations iii, 1-9.

<sup>4</sup> Tobias vi, 16.

in the extreme, war against the habits and properties of the soul, which are imperfect in the extreme, so that the soul has to suffer the existence of two contraries within it. For, as this flame is of brightest light, and assails the soul, its light shines in the darkness of the soul, which is as dark as the light is bright; and then the soul is conscious of its vicious, natural darkness, which sets<sup>1</sup> itself against the supernatural light, and it is not conscious of the supernatural light, because it has it not within itself, as it has its own darkness, and the darkness comprehends not the light. And thus it will be conscious of this its darkness for so long as the light beats upon it, for souls can have no perception of their darkness save when the Divine light beats upon them and only when the Divine light drives out the darkness is the soul illumined and transformed and able to see the Divine light,<sup>2</sup> its spiritual eye having been cleansed and strengthened by the Divine light. For infinite light will produce total darkness in sight that is impure and weak and the faculty will be subdued by excess of sense. And thus this flame was oppressive to the soul in the sight of its understanding.

23. And since this flame is of itself extremely loving, it assails the will in a loving and a tender manner; and since the will is of itself extremely arid and hard, the hardness of the one is felt by comparison with the tenderness of the other, and the aridity of the one by comparison with the love of the other, and the will becomes conscious of its natural hardness and aridity with respect to God, when this flame beats lovingly and tenderly upon it. And it is not conscious of the love and tenderness of the flame (being prevented by its hardness and aridity, wherein these other contraries, tenderness and love, can find no place) until one group of the contraries is driven out by the other and the love and tenderness of God reign in the will. And in this way this flame has been oppressive to the will—in making it to feel and suffer its hardness and aridity. And in the same way, since this flame is most extensive and vast, and the will is restricted and narrow, the will is conscious of its narrowness and restraint while the flame is beating upon it, until the flame acts upon it and dilates and enlarges it and makes it able to receive it. And likewise, since this flame is sweet and delectable, and the spiritual palate of the will was distempered by the humours of inordinate<sup>3</sup> affections, it was insipid and bitter to it, and it was unable to taste the sweet food of the love of God. And so, when

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'opposes.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'beats upon it, and the soul will be enlightened and transformed and will be able to see the Divine light.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P: 'distempered.'

the will is brought near to this most extensive and most delectable flame, it is conscious also of its constraint and insipidity, and is not conscious of the savour of the flame because it feels<sup>1</sup> none within itself, but feels only that which it has in itself—namely, its own misery. And finally, since this flame is of vast wealth and goodness and delight, and the soul of itself has great poverty and has no good thing of its own, nor can give any satisfaction, it realizes and is clearly conscious of its miseries and poverty and wickedness by contrast with this wealth and goodness and delight, and realizes not the wealth and goodness and delight of the flame (for wickedness comprehends not goodness, nor poverty, riches, and so forth) until this flame succeeds in purifying the soul, and together with transformation gives it riches, glories and delights. In this way the flame was at first oppressive to the soul beyond all description, by reason of the battle which was being waged within it by the contrary forces. God, Who is all perfection, wars against all the imperfect habits of the soul, so that He may transform it in Himself and make it sweet, bright and peaceful, as does the fire when it has entered the wood.

24. This severe purgation comes to pass in few souls—in those alone whom the Lord desires to raise to a higher degree of union; for He prepares each one with a purgation of greater or less severity, according to the degree to which He desires to raise it, and also according to its impurity and imperfection. And so this pain is like that of purgatory; for, just as in purgatory spirits are purged in order that they may be able to see God through clear vision in the life to come, so, after their own manner, souls are purged in this state in order that they may be able to be transformed in Him through love in this life.<sup>2</sup>

25. As to the intensity of this purgation—when it is greater and when less, and when it is according to the understanding and when according to the will and how according to the memory, and when and how it comes according to the substance of the soul, and likewise when it purges the entire soul and when its sensual part only, and how it may be known when it is of one kind and when of another, and at what time and point and season of the spiritual way it begins—we have treated this in the *Dark Night of the Ascent of Mount Carmel* and it affects not our purpose here, wherefore I speak not of it. It suffices here to know that God Himself, Who desires to enter the soul by union and transformation of love, is He that aforetime has been assailing it and purging it with the light and heat of His Divine flame,

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'it has.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'in this union.'

even as the fire that enters the wood is the same fire that has prepared it,<sup>1</sup> as we have said. And thus that very flame that has played inwardly upon the soul and is now sweet to it was aforetime oppressive to it, when it was playing upon it without.<sup>2</sup>

26. And it is this that the soul desires to convey when it says in this line: 'Since thou art no longer oppressive.' This, briefly, is as though the soul were to say: Since not only art thou not dark to me as thou wert aforetime, but art the Divine light of my understanding, wherewith I can now look upon thee, and dost not only not cause my weakness to faint, but art rather the strength of my will wherewith I can love thee and enjoy thee, now that it is wholly converted into Divine love, and since thou art not pain and affliction to the substance of my soul, but art rather its glory and delight and boundless freedom, therefore may there be said of me that which is sung in the Divine Songs, in these words: 'Who is this that cometh up from the desert, abounding in delights, leaning upon her Beloved and scattering love on every side?'<sup>3</sup> Thus, then, it is.

**Perfect me now if it be thy will,**

27. That is to say: Perfect and consummate the spiritual marriage in me with the beatific vision of Thyself—for it is this that the soul beseeches. For, although it is true that in this state that is so lofty, the more completely transformed in love is the soul the more conformed is it, and that it knows nothing of itself, neither is able to ask anything for itself, but all is for its Beloved; since charity, as Saint Paul says, seeks nothing for itself, but only for the Beloved;<sup>4</sup> nevertheless, since it lives in hope, and thus cannot fail to be conscious of something that is lacking, it sighs deeply, though with sweetness and joy, in proportion as it still lacks complete possession of the adoption of the sons of God, wherein, when its glory is consummated, its desire will be at rest.<sup>5</sup> This desire, although here below the soul may have closer union with God, will never be satisfied or at rest until its glory shall appear, especially if it has already tasted the sweetness and delight thereof, which it has in this state. This sweetness is such that, had God not granted a favour to its flesh, and covered its natural being with His

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P add: 'before entering it.'

<sup>2</sup> S reads: 'Thus that very flame that aforetime was oppressive to it is now sweet to it.' Bz: 'And thus, having played upon it, it was aforetime oppressive to it, in playing upon it.'

<sup>3</sup> Canticles viii, 5. [The quotation ends at the word 'Beloved.']

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians xiii, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Bz, C: 'will be removed.' S: 'will be ended.'

right hand (as He did to Moses in the rock, that he might see His glory and not die<sup>1</sup>) it would have died at each touch of this flame, and its natural being would have been destroyed, since its lower part would have no means of enduring so great and sublime a fire of glory.

28. Wherefore this desire and the soul's entreaty for it are not accompanied by pain, for the soul in this state is no longer capable of suffering pain, but its entreaty is made with delectable and sweet desire, and the soul entreats conformity between its spirit and its senses. It is for this reason that it says in this line: 'Perfect me now, if it be Thy will.' For the will and desire are to such an extent united with God that the soul regards it as its glory that it should fulfil the will of God in it. Such are the glimpses of glory and love that in these touches filter through the crevices of the door of the soul, in order to enter, though they cannot do so because of the smallness of our earthly house, that the soul would have little love if it entreated not to be allowed to enter into that perfection and consummation of love. Furthermore, the soul now sees that in that delectable power and communication with the Spouse, the Holy Spirit is impelling and inviting it, by means of that boundless glory which He is setting before its eyes, in wondrous ways and with sweet affections, saying to it in its spirit that which is said to the Bride in the Songs, which she relates in these words: 'See that which my Spouse is saying to me: "Arise and make haste, my love, my dove, my fair one, and come; for winter is now past and the rain is ended and gone far away, and the flowers have appeared in our land. And the time of pruning has come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree has produced her fruits, the vines in flower have yielded their fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come, my dove, into the holes of the rock, into the cavern of the wall; show me thy sweet face, let thy voice sound in my ears, for thy voice is sweet, and thy countenance is comely."'<sup>2</sup> All these things the soul perceives, and she most clearly understands, in the sublime sense of glory, that the Holy Spirit is showing them to her in that tender and sweet flame,<sup>3</sup> desiring to bring her in to that glory. Wherefore the soul, being thus impelled, here makes answer: 'Perfect me now if it be Thy will.' Herein she makes the Spouse those two petitions which He taught us in the Gospel, namely: *Adveniat regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua.*<sup>4</sup> And thus it is as though she were to say: Give me this kingdom per-

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xxxiii, 22.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'flaming.']

<sup>2</sup> Canticles ii, 10-14.

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew vi, 10.

fectly, if it be Thy will—that is, according to Thy will. And that this may come to pass:

**Break the web of this sweet encounter.**

29. It is this web which hinders so important a business as this, since it is easy to reach God once the obstacles which separate the soul from union with God are taken away and the webs are broken. The webs which can hinder this union and which must be broken if the soul is to approach God and possess Him perfectly may be said to be three, namely: the temporal, which comprises all creatures; the natural, which comprises the operations and inclinations that are purely natural; and the third, the sensual, which comprises only<sup>1</sup> union of the soul with the body, which is sensual and animal life, whereof Saint Paul says: 'We know that if this our earthly house be dissolved we have a dwelling-place of God in the heavens.'<sup>2</sup> The first two webs must of necessity be broken in order that we may attain to this possession of the union of God, wherein all things of the world shall be put aside and renounced, and all the natural affections and appetites be mortified, and the operations of the soul, from being natural, become Divine. All this was broken and effected in the soul by the oppressive encounters of this flame when it was oppressive to it; for, through spiritual purgation, as we have said above, the soul succeeds in breaking these two webs and thence in becoming united with God, as it now is, and there remains to be broken only the third web of this life of sense. For this reason the soul here speaks of a web and not of webs; for there is now no other web to be broken than this, which, being already so delicate and fine and so greatly spiritualized by this union with God, is not attacked by the flame severely, as were the two others, but sweetly and delectably. For this reason the soul speaks here and calls the encounter 'sweet,' for it is the sweeter and the more delectable inasmuch as the soul believes it to be about to break the web of life.

30. Therefore it must be known, with regard to the natural dying<sup>3</sup> of souls that reach this state, that, though the manner of their death, from the natural standpoint, is similar to that of others, yet in the cause and mode of their death there is a great difference. For while the deaths of others may be caused by infirmities or length of days, when these souls die, although it may be from some infirmity, or from old age, their

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P omit: 'only.'

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians v, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Several manuscripts read 'love' for 'dying.'

spirits are wrested away by nothing less than some loving impulse and encounter far loftier and of greater power and strength than any in the past, for it has succeeded in breaking the web and bearing away a jewel, which is the spirit. And thus the death of such souls is very sweet and gentle, more so than was their spiritual life all their life long, for they die amid the delectable encounters and sublimest impulses of love, being like to the swan, which sings most gently<sup>1</sup> when it is at the point of death. For this reason David said that the death of saints in the fear of God was precious<sup>2</sup>, for at such a time all the riches of the soul come to unite together, and the rivers of love of the soul are about to enter the sea, and these are so broad and dense and motionless<sup>3</sup> that they seem to be seas already. From the beginning to the end, their treasures unite together to accompany the just man as he departs and goes forth to his kingdom, and praises are heard from the ends of the earth,<sup>4</sup> which, as Isaias says, are the glories of the just man.

31. When, therefore, at the time of these glorious encounters, the soul feels itself very near to going forth<sup>5</sup> to possess its kingdom completely and perfectly, in the abundance wherewith it sees itself enriched (for it knows itself now to be pure and rich and full of virtues and prepared for this, since in this state God permits it to see His beauty<sup>6</sup> and entrusts it with the gifts and virtues that He has given it, and all this turns into love and praise, without a trace of presumption or vanity, since there is no leaven of imperfection to corrupt the mass), and when it sees that it has only now to break this frail web of natural life wherein it feels itself to be enmeshed and imprisoned, and its liberty to be impeded, together with its desire to behold itself loosed<sup>7</sup> and to see itself with Christ (for it grieves that a life which is so strong and high should be obstructed by another that is so weak and low), it begs that this web may be broken, saying: 'Break the web of this sweet encounter.'

32. This life is called a web for three reasons: first, because of the bond that exists between spirit and flesh; second, because it makes a division between God and the soul; third, because even as a web is not so thick<sup>8</sup> and dense but that the light can shine through it, even so in this state this bond appears to it to be a very fine web, since it is

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'most sweetly.'

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. p. 31, n. 12, above.]

<sup>4</sup> C: 'praises of the blessings of the earth are heard.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg, P: 'very near to ascending.'

<sup>7</sup> Bg, P: 'to be loosed.'

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxv, 15 [A.V., cxvi, 15].

<sup>6</sup> [Or, 'its (own) beauty.']

<sup>8</sup> Bg, C: 'so opaque.'

greatly spiritualized and enlightened and refined so that the Divinity cannot but shine through it. And when the soul becomes conscious of the power of the life to come, it feels keenly the weakness of this other life, which appears to it as a very fine web—even as a spider's web, which is the name that David gives to it, saying: 'Our years shall be considered as a spider.'<sup>1</sup> And it is much less still in the eyes of a soul that is so greatly enlarged; for, since this soul has entered into the consciousness of God, it is conscious of things in the way that God is; and in the sight of God, as David also says, a thousand years are as yesterday when it is past.<sup>2</sup> And according to Isaías all nations are as if they were not.<sup>3</sup> And they have the same importance to the soul, namely, all things are to it as nothing, and to its own eyes it is itself nothing: to it its God alone is all.

33. But here one point should be noticed. Why does the soul here beg that the web may be broken, rather than cut or allowed to wear itself out, since all these things would seem to have the same result? We may say that this is for four reasons. First, in order to use language of greater propriety, for in an encounter it is more proper to say that a thing is broken than that it is cut or wears away. Second, because love delights in the force of love and in forceful and impetuous contacts, and these are produced by breaking rather than by cutting or wearing away. Third, because love desires that the act should be very brief, so that it may then be the more quickly concluded; the quicker<sup>4</sup> and more spiritual is it, the greater is its power and worth. For virtue in union is stronger than virtue that is scattered; and love is introduced as form is introduced into matter, namely, in an instant, and until then there has been no act but only dispositions for an act; and thus spiritual acts are performed in the soul as in an instant, since they are infused by God, but the other acts, which are performed by the soul of its own accord, may more properly be called dispositions of successive affections and desires which never succeed in becoming perfect acts of love or contemplation, save occasionally when, as I say, God forms and perfects them with great rapidity in the spirit.<sup>5</sup> For this cause the Wise Man said that the end of a prayer is better than the beginning, and, as is commonly said, the short prayer penetrates the Heavens. Wherefore the soul that is already prepared can perform more acts and acts of greater intensity<sup>6</sup> in a short time than the soul that is not prepared can

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxxix, 9 [A.V., xc, 9].

<sup>2</sup> Isaías xl, 17. Bg, P add: 'before Him.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'God forms them in the spirit.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: 'more acts and more interior acts.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxxxix, 4 [A.V., xc, 4].

<sup>6</sup> Bg, C, P: 'the briefer.'

perform in a long time; and merely because of its thorough preparation, it is wont to remain for a long time<sup>1</sup> in the act of love or contemplation. And the soul that is not prepared wastes its strength in the preparation of the spirit, and even when this is done the fire has not yet penetrated the wood, whether because of its great humidity, or because of the scant heat generated in the preparation, or for both these causes. But into the soul that is prepared the act of love enters continuously, for the spark seizes upon the dry fuel at each contact; and thus the soul that is kindled in love prefers the short act of breaking the web to the duration of the act of cutting it or of its wearing away. The fourth reason is that the web of life<sup>2</sup> may be more quickly destroyed, for cutting a thing and allowing it to wear away are acts performed after greater deliberation, as it is necessary to wait until the thing is riper, or worn, or for some other condition, whereas breaking apparently needs not to wait for maturity or for anything else.

34. And this is the desire of the enamoured soul, which brooks not the delay of waiting until its life come naturally to an end or until at such a time it be cut, because the force of love and the propensities which it feels make it desire and entreat that its life may be at once broken by some encounter and supernatural assault of love. The soul in this state knows very well that it is the habit of God to take away before their time the souls that He greatly loves, perfecting in them in a short time, by means of that love, that which in any event<sup>3</sup> they might have gained gradually in their ordinary progress. It is this that is said by the Wise Man<sup>4</sup>: 'He that is pleasing to God is made beloved, and living among sinners he was translated and taken away, lest wickedness should alter<sup>5</sup> his understanding or deceit beguile his soul. Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time. For his soul was pleasing to God, therefore hastened He to take him out of the midst,' etc.<sup>6</sup> Thus far we quote the words of the Wise Man, wherein it will be seen with what propriety and reason the soul uses that word 'break'; for in these words the Holy Spirit uses the two terms 'take away'<sup>7</sup> and 'haste,' which are far removed from the idea of any delay.<sup>8</sup> In speaking of 'haste,' God indicates the speed wherewith He has

<sup>1</sup> Bz, C: 'for a sufficient time.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'that life.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P: 'in a long time.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz abbreviates: 'perfecting them in a short time, for it is this that is said by the Wise Man.'

<sup>5</sup> C: 'should take away.'

<sup>6</sup> Wisdom iv, 10-11, 13-14.

<sup>7</sup> [The word translated 'take away' has in the original Spanish the meaning of 'take away violently,' 'snatch away.']

<sup>8</sup> S adds: 'in that which is done by God.'

caused the love of the just man to be perfected in a short time; and by the words 'take away' He indicates that He has borne him off before his natural time. For this reason it is a great thing for the soul to practise the acts of love in this life, so that, when a soul is perfected in a short time, it may not stay long, either in this world or the next, without seeing God.

35. But let us also now see why the soul calls this interior assault of the Holy Spirit an encounter rather than by any other name. The reason is because, as we have said, the soul in God is conscious of an infinite desire that its life may come to an end, yet, because the time of its perfecting is not yet come, this is not accomplished; and it sees that, to the end that it may be the more completely perfected and raised up<sup>1</sup> above the flesh, God makes these assaults upon it that are glorious and Divine and after the manner of encounters, which, as they have the object of purifying it and bringing it out of the flesh, are indeed encounters, wherewith He penetrates the soul continually, deifying its substance and making it Divine, wherein the Being of God absorbs the soul above all being. The reason for this is that God has encountered the soul and pierced it to the quick in the Holy Spirit, Whose communications are impetuous when they are full of fervour,<sup>2</sup> as is this encounter, which the soul, since it has a lively taste of God, calls sweet; not that many other touches and encounters which it receives in this state are not also sweet, but rather that this is eminently so above all the rest; for God effects it, as we have said,<sup>3</sup> in order to loose the soul and glorify it quickly. Wherefore the soul takes courage to say: 'Break the web of this sweet encounter.'

36. To sum up this whole stanza, then, it is as though the soul were to say: Oh, flame of the Holy Spirit, that so intimately and tenderly dost pierce the substance of my soul and cauterize it with Thy glorious heat! Since Thou art now so loving as to show Thyself with the desire of giving Thyself to me in eternal life; if before now my petitions did not reach Thine ears, when with yearnings and fatigues of love my sense and spirit suffered by reason of my great weakness and impurity and the little fortitude of love that I had, I entreated Thee to loose me, and to bear me away with Thee, for with desire did my soul desire Thee since my impatient love would not suffer me to be conformed with the condition of this life that Thou desiredst me still to live,<sup>4</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Bg, Bz, P: 'and carried away.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'are favoured.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P have 'shines upon it' for 'effects it.' Bz omits: 'for God . . . said.'

<sup>4</sup> C: 'that Thou wouldst desire should come to me.'

the past assaults of love sufficed not, because they were not of sufficient quality for me to attain my desire; now that I am so greatly strengthened in love that not alone do my sense and spirit not fail before Thee, but rather my heart and my flesh are strengthened in Thy sight, they rejoice in the living God with a great conformity between their various parts. Therefore do I entreat that which Thou desirest me to entreat, and that which Thou desirest not, that desire I not, nor can I desire it,<sup>1</sup> nor does it pass through my mind to desire it; and, since my petitions are now more effective and more greatly esteemed in Thine eyes (for they go forth from Thee and Thou movest me to make them, and I pray to Thee with delight<sup>2</sup> and rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, and my judgment comes forth from Thy countenance, which comes to pass when Thou esteemest and hearest my prayers), do Thou break the slender web of this life, and let it not come to pass that age and years cut it after a natural manner, so that I may be able to love Thee with the fullness and satisfaction which my soul desires without end, for ever.

## STANZA II

**Oh, sweet burn! Oh, delectable wound!<sup>3</sup> Oh, soft hand! Oh, delicate touch  
That savours of eternal life and pays every debt! In slaying,  
thou hast changed death into life.**

## EXPOSITION

**I**N this stanza the soul explains how the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are They that<sup>4</sup> effect within it this Divine work of union. Thus the 'hand,' the 'burn' and the 'touch' are in substance one and the same thing; and the soul gives them these names, inasmuch as they describe the effect which is caused by each. The 'burn' is the Holy Spirit, the 'hand' is the Father and the 'touch,' the Son. And thus the soul here magnifies the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, dwelling upon<sup>5</sup> three great favours<sup>6</sup> and blessings which They work within it, since They have changed its death into life, transforming it in Themselves. The first is the delectable wound, which the soul attributes to the Holy Spirit, wherefore it

<sup>1</sup> S omits: 'nor can I desire it.'

<sup>3</sup> S has 'flame' [*llama* for *llaga*].

<sup>5</sup> Bg omits: 'dwelling upon.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'with fervour.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P omit: 'are They that.'

<sup>6</sup> P has 'walls' for 'favours.'

is called a sweet<sup>1</sup> burn. The second is the desire for eternal life, which it attributes to the Son, and therefore calls a delicate touch. The third is His having transformed the soul in Himself, which is a gift<sup>2</sup> where-with it is well pleased; this is attributed to the Father, and therefore the soul calls it a soft hand. And although the soul here names the three things, because of the properties of their effects, it addresses only one of them, saying: 'Thou hast changed death into life.' For they all work in one, and thus the soul attributes the whole of their work to one, and the whole of it to all of them. There follows the line:

**Oh, sweet burn!**

2. This burn, as we said, here signifies the Holy Spirit, for, as Moses says in Deuteronomy, our Lord God is a consuming fire<sup>3</sup>—that is, a fire of love. This fire, as it is of infinite power, is able, to an extent which cannot be measured, to consume and transform into itself the soul that it touches. But it burns and absorbs everything according to the preparation thereof; one thing more and another less; and this according to its own pleasure, and after the manner and at the time which it pleases. And since God is an infinite fire of love, when therefore He is pleased to touch the soul with some severity, the heat of the soul rises to such a degree of love that the soul believes that it is being burned with a heat greater than any other in the world. For this reason, in this union it speaks of the Holy Spirit as of a burn; for, just as in a burn the fire is most intense and vehement, and its effect is greater than that of other fires, so the soul describes the act of this union as a burn with respect to other acts, since it is, more properly than any other, an enkindled fire of love. And inasmuch as this Divine fire, in this case, has transformed the soul into itself, not only is the soul conscious of the burn, but it has itself become one burn of vehement fire.

3. And it is a wondrous thing, worthy to be related, that, though this fire of God is so vehement and so consuming that it would consume a thousand worlds more easily than fire here on earth consumes a straw of flax, it consumes not the soul wherein it burns in this way, neither destroys it, still less causes it any affliction, but rather, in proportion to the strength of love, it brings it delight and deifies it, glowing and burning in it sweetly. And this is due to the purity and perfection of the spirit wherein it burns in the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> Thus did it

<sup>1</sup> Only Bg, P have 'sweet.'

<sup>2</sup> So Bg, P. The other authorities have 'a debt.'

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy iv, 24.

<sup>4</sup> So S. The other authorities omit: 'in the Holy Spirit.'

come to pass, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, when this fire descended with great vehemence and enkindled the disciples;<sup>1</sup> and, as Saint Gregory says,<sup>2</sup> they burned inwardly and sweetly in love. And this is that which is intended by the Church, when she says to this same purpose: There came fire from Heaven, burning not but giving splendour; consuming not but enlightening.<sup>3</sup> For, in these communications, since the object of God is to magnify the soul, this fire wearies it not and afflicts it not but rather enlarges it and delights it; nor does it blacken it and cover it with ashes, as fire does to coal, but it makes it glorious and rich, for which cause the soul calls it a sweet burn.

4. And thus the happy soul that by great good fortune attains to this burning knows everything, tastes everything, does all that it desires, and prospers, and none prevails against it and nothing touches it. For it is of this soul that the Apostle says: 'The spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man.'<sup>4</sup> *Et iterum*:<sup>5</sup> 'The spiritual man searcheth all things, yea, the depth of God.'<sup>6</sup> For this is the property of love, to seek out all the good things of the Beloved.

5. Oh, the great glory of you souls that are worthy to attain to this supreme fire,<sup>7</sup> for, while it has infinite power to consume and annihilate you, it is certain that it consumes you not, but grants you a boundless consummation in glory!<sup>8</sup> Marvel not that God should bring certain souls to so high a state; for the sun is conspicuous for certain marvellous effects which it causes; as the Holy Spirit says, it burns the mountains of the saints after three manners.<sup>9</sup> Since, then, this burn is so sweet, as we have here explained, how delectable, may we believe, will it not be in one that is touched by it? Of this the soul would fain speak, yet speaks not, but keeps this esteem in its heart, and in its mouth the wonder implied in this word 'Oh,' saying: 'Oh, sweet burn!'

### Oh, delectable wound!<sup>10</sup>

6. Having addressed the burn, the soul now addresses the wound caused by the burn; and, as the burn was sweet, as has been said, the wound, according to reason, must be like to the burn. And thus the wound caused by a sweet burn will be a delectable wound, for, since

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii, 3.

<sup>2</sup> [In officio feriæ 2æ Pent.]

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'And again.'

<sup>7</sup> Bg, P: 'to this state of supreme fire.'

<sup>9</sup> [Ecclesiasticus xliii, 4.]

<sup>2</sup> Hom. XXX, in Evang.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 15.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 10.

<sup>8</sup> [See p. 38, n. 1, above.]

<sup>10</sup> S has 'flame' [*llama* for *llaga*].

the burn is one of sweet love, the wound will be one of sweet love and thus will be sweetly delectable.

7. And for an explanation to be made of the nature of the wound here addressed by the soul, it must be known that a burn caused by material fire always leaves a wound on the part subjected to it. And fire has this property that, if it be applied to a wound that was not caused by fire, it is turned into a wound inflicted by fire. And this burn of love has the property that, when it touches a soul, whether this soul be wounded by other wounds, such as miseries and sins, or whether it be whole, it at once leaves it wounded with love. Thus wounds due to another cause have now become wounds of love.<sup>1</sup> But there is this difference between this loving burn and a burn caused by material fire, that the wound made by the latter can only be healed by the application of other medicines, whereas the wound made by the burn of love can be cured by no other medicine, but only by the same burn that has caused the wound. And the same burn that cures the wound inflicts a wound as it cures it; for each time that the burn of love touches the wound of love, it inflicts a greater wound of love, and thus it cures and heals the more inasmuch as it wounds the more; for when the lover is most wounded he is most whole and the cure wrought by love is the infliction of a hurt and a wound over and above the wound already inflicted, until the wound is so severe that the soul comes to be wholly dissolved in the wound of love. And in this way, when it is now completely cauterized and turned into a wound of love, it regains its perfect health in love, because it is transformed in love. In this way must be understood the wound of which the soul here speaks: it is altogether wounded and altogether healthy. Yet, though the soul is altogether wounded and altogether healthy, the burning of love still performs its office, which is to touch and to wound with love; and, inasmuch as this love is wholly delectable and wholly healthy, the effect which it produces is a relieving<sup>2</sup> of the wound, after the manner of a good physician. Wherefore the soul well says in this place: 'Oh, delectable wound!' Oh, then, wound the more delectable according as the fire of love that causes it is the loftier and the more sublime! For, as the Holy Spirit inflicted the wound only in order to relieve

<sup>1</sup> Bz abbreviates: 'wounded by other wounds, they have now become wounds of love.'

<sup>2</sup> [The past participle of this verb (*regalar*) has also the meaning 'delectable.' It is so translated in the verse-line above and elsewhere in this passage, and where the words 'relief,' 'relieve' occur, the play on the noun (or verb) and the adjective is to be understood.]

it, and as He has a great desire and will to relieve the soul, the wound will be great, for greatly will it be relieved.<sup>1</sup>

8. Oh, happy wound, inflicted by One Who cannot but heal! Oh, fortunate and most happy wound, for thou wert inflicted only for relief, and the quality of thy pain is the relief and delight of the wounded soul! Great art thou, oh, delectable wound, since great is He that has inflicted thee; and great is thy relief, because the fire of love is infinite and it relieves thee according to thy capacity and greatness. Oh, then, thou delectable wound! So much the more sublimely delectable<sup>2</sup> art thou in proportion as the burn has touched the infinite centre<sup>3</sup> of the substance of the soul, burning all that was capable of being burned, that it might relieve all that was capable of being relieved. We may represent this burn and this wound as being the highest degree to which the soul can attain in this state. There are many other ways wherein God cauterizes the soul which attain not so far as this, nor are they like this; for this is purely a touch of the Divinity in the soul, without any form or figure, whether intellectual or imaginary.

9. But there is another and a most sublime way wherein the soul may be cauterized, by means of an intellectual figure, which is after this manner. It will come to pass that, when the soul is enkindled in the love of God, although not to the high degree of which we have spoken (though it is most meet that it should be so for that which I am about to describe), the soul will be conscious of an assault upon it made by a seraph with an arrow or a dart<sup>4</sup> completely enkindled in fire of love, which will pierce the soul, now enkindled like a coal, or, to speak more truly, like a flame, and will cauterize it in a sublime manner; and when it has pierced and cauterized it thus with that arrow, the flame (that is, the soul) will rush forth and will rise suddenly and vehemently, even as comes to pass in a red-hot furnace or forge, when they stir or poke the fire,<sup>5</sup> and make the flame hotter. Then, upon being struck by this enkindled dart, the soul is conscious of the wound with a sovereign delight;<sup>6</sup> for, not only is it moved through and through in great sweetness,<sup>7</sup> by the stirring and the impetuous motion caused by that seraph, wherein it feels the great heat and melting of love, but the keen wound and the healing herb wherewith the

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P omit: 'for greatly will it be relieved.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P [intensify the play upon words by reading]: 'so much the more sublimely and delectably relieved' [*regaladamente regalada*].

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P: 'the last centre.'

<sup>4</sup> [Cf. p. 39, n. 8, above. The word 'arrow' (*flecha*) is not found in the first redaction.]

<sup>5</sup> Bz, C add: 'and the fire revives.'

<sup>6</sup> C, S: 'with a surpassing sovereign delight.'

<sup>7</sup> Bg: 'in great solitude.'

effect of the dart was being greatly assuaged<sup>1</sup> are felt by it like a keen point in the substance of the spirit, even as in the heart of him whose soul has been thus pierced.

10. Who can speak fittingly of this intimate point of the wound which seems to strike the very centre of the heart of the spirit, which is the point wherein is felt the refinement of its delight?<sup>2</sup> For the soul feels, as it were, a grain of mustard seed, most minute, highly enkindled and wondrous keen, which sends out from itself to its circumference<sup>3</sup> a keen and enkindled fire of love; which fire, arising from the substance and virtue of that keen point, wherein lies the substance and the virtue of the herb, is felt by the soul to be subtly diffused through all its spiritual and substantial veins, according to its potentiality and strength. Herein it feels its heat to be increasing and to be growing in strength and its love to be becoming so refined in this heat that it seems to have within it seas of loving fire which reach to the farthest heights and depths of the spheres, filling it wholly with love. Herein it seems to the soul that the whole universe is a sea of love wherein it is engulfed, and it can descry no term or goal at which this love can come to an end, but feels within itself, as we have said, the keen point and centre of love.

11. And that whereof the soul now has fruition cannot be further described, save by saying that the soul is now conscious of the aptness of the comparison made in the Gospel between the Kingdom of Heaven and the grain of mustard seed; which grain, because of its great heat, although small, grows into a great tree.<sup>4</sup> For the soul sees that it has become like a vast fire of love which arises from that enkindled point in the heart of the spirit.

12. Few souls attain to a state as high as this, but some have done so, especially those whose virtue and spirituality was to be transmitted to the succession of their children. For God bestows spiritual wealth and strength upon the head of a house, together with the first-fruits of the Spirit, according to the greater or lesser number of the descendants who are to inherit his doctrine and spirituality.

13. Let us return, then, to the work done by that seraph, which in truth is to strike and to wound the spirit interiorly. If God should sometimes permit the effect of the wound to pass outward to the bodily senses, to an extent corresponding to the interior wound, the effect of

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. p. 40, n. 2, above.]

<sup>2</sup> C omits this last clause.

<sup>3</sup> C: 'which sows in the circumference.' Bz has 'disseminates' for 'sows.'

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew xiii, 31-2.

the impact and the wound will be felt without, as came to pass when the seraph wounded<sup>1</sup> the soul of Saint Francis with love, inflicting upon him five wounds, and in that way the effect of these wounds became visible in his body, and he was actually wounded, and received the imprint of the wounds in his body as he had also received them in his soul. For, as a rule, God bestows no favours upon the body without bestowing them first and principally upon the soul. And then, the greater is the delight and strength of love which causes the wound within the soul, the more of it is manifested outwardly in the bodily wound, and if the one grows, the other grows likewise. This comes to pass because, when these souls have been purified and made strong<sup>2</sup> in God, that which to their corruptible flesh causes pain and torture is sweet and delectable to their strong and healthy spirits; wherefore it is a wondrous thing to feel the pain growing in the pleasure. This wonder Job perceived in his wounds, when he said to God: 'Turning to me, Thou tormentest me wonderfully.'<sup>3</sup> For it is a great marvel, and a thing worthy of the abundance of the sweetness and delight which God has laid up for them that fear Him,<sup>4</sup> that, the greater is the pain and torment of which the soul is conscious, the greater is the pleasure and delight<sup>5</sup> which He causes it to enjoy. But when the wound is within the soul only, and is not communicated without, the delight can be far more intense and sublime; for, as the flesh has the spirit in check, so, when the blessings of the spirit are communicated to it, the flesh draws in the rein and bridles this fleet steed, which is the spirit, and restrains its great energy; for, if it makes use of its strength, the rein will break. But until it break, its freedom will be continually oppressed. For, as the Wise Man says: 'The corruptible body presseth down the soul and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the spiritual sense which of itself museth upon many things.'<sup>6</sup>

14. This I say that it may be understood that he who will ever cling to natural reasoning and ability in his journey to God will not become a very spiritual person. For there are some who think that they can attain to the powers and the height of supernatural spirituality by means of the power and operation of sense alone, though this of itself is low and no more than natural. They cannot attain thereto save by setting aside and renouncing bodily sense and its operation. But it is quite different when a spiritual effect overflows from spirit into

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'struck.'

<sup>2</sup> So Bg. The other authorities [and P. Silverio] read 'and set upon God.'

<sup>3</sup> Job x, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xxx, 20 [A.V., xxxi, 19].

<sup>5</sup> S: 'and sweetness.'

<sup>6</sup> Wisdom ix, 15.

sense, for, when this is the case, great spirituality may accrue,<sup>1</sup> as is clear from what we have said of the wounds, the outward manifestation of which corresponds to an inward power. This came to pass in Saint Paul, when the intensity of his soul's realization of the sufferings of Christ was so great that it overflowed into his body, as he writes to the Galatians, saying: 'I bear in my body the marks<sup>2</sup> of my Lord Jesus.'<sup>3</sup>

15. No more need be said about the burn and the wound, but if they are as we have here depicted them, what, do we believe, will be the hand that inflicts this burn, and what will be the touch? This the soul describes in the line following, lauding it rather than expounding it, and saying:

**Oh, soft hand! Oh, delicate touch**

16. This hand, as we have said, is the merciful and omnipotent Father. Since it is as generous and liberal as it is powerful and rich, we must understand that it will give rich and powerful gifts to the soul when it is opened to grant it favours, and thus the soul calls it a 'soft' hand. This is as though the soul were to say: Oh, hand, the softer to this my soul as softly touching it and softly laid upon it, since if thou wert to lean hardly upon it the whole world would perish; for at Thy glance alone the earth shakes,<sup>4</sup> the nations faint and the mountains crumble to pieces. Once more, then, I say: Oh, soft hand! For whereas thou wert harsh and severe to Job, since thou didst touch him somewhat heavily,<sup>5</sup> to me thou art as loving<sup>6</sup> and gentle as thou wert hard to him, and art laid upon my soul very firmly, but very lovingly and graciously and softly. For Thou givest death and Thou givest life and there is none that can escape from Thy hand. But Thou, oh, Life Divine, never slayest save to give life, even as Thou never woundest save to heal. When Thou chastisest, Thou touchest lightly,<sup>7</sup> yet Thy touch suffices to consume the world; but, when Thou bringest joy, Thou art laid firmly upon the soul and thus the joys of Thy sweetness are without number. Thou hast wounded me, oh, hand Divine, in order to heal me, and thou hast slain in me that which would have slain me but for the life of God wherein now I see that I live. And this Thou didst with the liberality<sup>8</sup> of Thy generous<sup>9</sup> grace, which Thou

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'is apt to accrue.'

<sup>3</sup> Galatians vi, 17.

<sup>5</sup> So S. Bz: 'so heavily.' Bg, C, P: 'so very heavily.'

<sup>6</sup> Bz: 'as pleasant.'

<sup>8</sup> C, S: 'liberty.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'the pains.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm ciii, 32 [A.V., civ, 32].

<sup>7</sup> S: 'sweetly.'

<sup>9</sup> Bg, Bz, P: 'gracious.'

showedst me in the touch wherewith Thou didst touch me—namely, the splendour of Thy glory and the image of Thy substance, which is Thy only begotten Son;<sup>1</sup> in Whom, since He is Thy wisdom, Thou reachest from one end to another mightily.<sup>2</sup> And this Thy only begotten Son, oh, merciful hand of the Father, is the delicate touch wherewith in the power of Thy burn Thou didst touch me and wound me.

17. Oh, then, thou delicate touch, Thou Word, Son of God, Who, through the delicateness of Thy Divine Being, dost subtly penetrate the substance of my soul, and, touching it wholly and delicately, dost absorb it wholly in Thyself in Divine ways of delight and sweetness which have never been heard of in the land of Chanaan, nor seen in Theman!<sup>3</sup> Oh, delicate touch of the Word, delicate, yea, wondrously delicate to me, which, having overthrown the mountains and broken the stones in Mount Horeb with the shadow of Thy power and strength that went before Thee, didst reveal Thyself more sweetly and powerfully to the Prophet with the whisper of gentle air.<sup>4</sup> Oh, gentle touch, that art so delicate and gentle! Say, Word, Son of God, how dost Thou touch the soul so gently and delicately when Thou art so terrible and powerful? Oh blessed, thrice blessed,<sup>5</sup> the soul whom Thou dost touch so delicately and gently though Thou art so terrible and powerful!<sup>6</sup> Tell this out to the world. Nay, tell it not to the world, for the world knows naught of air so gentle, and will not feel<sup>7</sup> Thee, because it can neither receive Thee nor see Thee.<sup>8</sup> Only they who withdraw from the world and whom Thou refinest shall know Thee,<sup>9</sup> my God and my life, and behold Thee when Thou touchest them delicately, since purity corresponds with purity,<sup>10</sup> and thus they shall feel Thee and rejoice in Thee. Thou dost touch them the more delicately because the substance of their souls has been beautified and purified and made delicate, and has been withdrawn from every creature and from every trace and touch of creature, and Thou art dwelling secretly and surely within them. And thou hidest them in the hiding-place of Thy presence (which is the Word) from the disturbance of men.<sup>11</sup>

18. Once again, then, oh, delicate touch, and again most delicate, the stronger and more powerful for being more delicate, that with the strength of Thy delicacy dost melt and remove the soul from all other

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews i, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Baruch iii, 22.

<sup>3</sup> S omits: 'thrice blessed.'

<sup>4</sup> S: 'will not receive Thee.'

<sup>5</sup> [Cf. p. 43, n. 8, above.]

<sup>11</sup> Psalm xxx, 21 [A.V., xxxi, 21].

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom viii, 1.

<sup>4</sup> [3 Kings xix, 11-12.]

<sup>6</sup> Bz omits this sentence.

<sup>8</sup> St. John xiv, 17.

<sup>10</sup> [*Lit.*, 'delicacy . . . delicacy.')

touches of created things and makest it Thine own alone and unitest it with Thyself. So gracious<sup>1</sup> an effect and impression dost Thou leave in the soul that every other touch, of everything else, whether high or low, seems to it rude and gross,<sup>2</sup> and even the sight of other things will offend it, and to have to do with them<sup>3</sup> and touch them will cause it trouble and grievous torment.

19. And it must be known that, the more delicate in itself is a thing, the broader and more capacious it is; and the more subtle and delicate it is, the more it becomes diffused<sup>4</sup> and communicative. The Word—that is, the touch which touches the soul—is infinitely subtle and delicate; and the soul is a vessel broad and capacious enough for the great purification and delicacy which belongs to it in this state. Oh, then, thou delicate touch, that dost infuse Thyself the more copiously and abundantly into my soul by reason of Thy greater subtlety<sup>5</sup> and of the greater purity of my soul!

20. And it must also be known that, the more subtle and delicate is the touch, the greater is the delight and pleasure that it communicates where it touches; and the less so it is, the less weight and bulk has the touch.<sup>6</sup> This Divine touch has neither bulk nor weight, for the Word, Who effects it, is far removed from any kind of mode and manner, and free from any kind of weight, of form, figure or accident, such as is wont to restrict and limit substance. And thus this touch of which the soul speaks here, being substantial (that is, of the Divine Substance), is ineffable. Oh, then, at last, thou ineffably delicate touch, that art the Word, that touchest not the soul save with Thy most pure and simple Being,<sup>7</sup> which, being infinite, is infinitely delicate, and therefore touches most subtly, lovingly, eminently and delicately!

### That savours of eternal life

21. Although this is not so in a perfect degree, there is indeed a certain savour herein of life eternal, as has been said above, which the soul tastes in this touch of God. And it is not incredible that this should be so if we believe, as we must believe, that this touch is substantial, that is to say, is a touch of the Substance of God in the substance of the soul; and to this many holy men have attained in this

<sup>1</sup> [*Delgado*.] Bg, P: 'delicate' [*delicado*].

<sup>2</sup> Bg adds: 'if it touches the soul.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P: 'to tolerate them.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'diffusive.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz, C, S: 'substance.'

<sup>6</sup> [I suspect a corrupt reading here; the passage as it stands is a literal rendering of the original.]

<sup>7</sup> Bg, P: 'with Thy most simple and sincere Being.' S: 'with Thy purest Substance and Thy most simple Being.'

life. Wherefore the delicacy of the delight which is felt in this touch is impossible of description; nor would I willingly speak thereof, lest it should be supposed that it is no more than that which I say; for there are no words to expound<sup>1</sup> such sublime things of God as come to pass in these souls; whereof the proper way to speak is for one that knows them to understand them inwardly and to feel them inwardly and enjoy them and be silent concerning them. For the soul in this state sees that these things are in some measure like the white stone which Saint John says will be given to him that conquers, and on the stone a name shall be written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.<sup>2</sup> This alone can be said of it with truth, that it savours of eternal life. For, although in this life we may not have perfect fruition of it, as in glory, yet nevertheless this touch, being of God, savours of eternal life. And in this way the soul in such a state tastes of the things of God, and there are communicated to it fortitude, wisdom, love, beauty, grace and goodness, and so forth. For, as God is all these things, the soul tastes them in one single touch of God, and thus the soul has fruition of Him according to its faculties and its substance.

22. And in this good which comes to the soul the unction of the Holy Spirit sometimes overflows into the body, and this is enjoyed by all the substance of sense and all the members of the body and the very marrow and bones, not as feebly as is usually the case, but with a feeling of great delight and glory, which is felt even in the remotest joints of the feet and hands. And the body feels such glory in the glory of the soul that it magnifies God after its own manner, perceiving that He is in its very bones, even as David said: 'All my bones shall say, "God, who is like unto Thee?"'<sup>3</sup> And since all that can be said concerning this matter is less than the truth, it suffices to say of the bodily experience, as of the spiritual, that it savours of eternal life.

### **And pays every debt!**

23. This the soul says because, in the savour of eternal life which it here experiences, it feels that it is being recompensed for the trials through which it has passed in order to come to this state. Herein it feels itself not only duly paid and satisfied, but excessively rewarded, so that it well understands the truth of the promise of the Spouse in the Gospel that He will reward the soul an hundredfold.<sup>4</sup> Thus there has been no tribulation, or temptation, or penance, or any other trial

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P add: 'and enumerate.'

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xxxiv, 10 [A.V., xxxv, 10].

<sup>2</sup> Apocalypse ii, 17.

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew xix, 23.

through which the soul has passed on this road<sup>1</sup> to which there does not correspond an hundredfold of consolation and delight in this life, so that the soul may very well now say: 'And pays every debt.'

24. And, in order that we may know what debts are these which the soul now recognizes as paid, it must be known that in the ordinary way no soul can attain to this lofty state and kingdom of the betrothal without first having passed through many tribulations and trials, since, as is said in the Acts of the Apostles, it behoves us to enter through many tribulations into the kingdom of the heavens;<sup>2</sup> which things have in this state passed, for henceforth the soul, being purified, has no more suffering.

25. The trials which are suffered by those that are to come to this state are of three kinds, namely: trials and discomforts, fears and temptations which come from the world, and that in many ways; temptations and aridities and afflictions relating to sense; tribulations, darknesses, perils,<sup>3</sup> abandonments, temptations and other trials relating to the spirit, so that in this way the soul may be purged according both to its spiritual and to its sensual part, in the way that we described in the exposition of the fourth line of the first stanza. And the reason why these trials are necessary for the soul that is to reach this state is that, just as a liquor of great excellence is placed only in a strong vessel, which has been made ready and purified, so this most lofty union<sup>4</sup> cannot belong to a soul that has not been fortified by trials and temptations, and purified with tribulations, darknesses and perils, one of which classes, purifies and fortifies sense and the other refines and purifies and disposes the spirit.<sup>5</sup> For even as impure spirits, in order to be united with God in glory, pass through the pains of fire in the life to come, even so, in order to reach the union of perfection in this life, they must pass through the fire of these said pains, a fire which burns more violently in some and less so in others, and for longer in some than in others, according to the degree of union to which God is pleased to raise them and conformably with the degree of purgation which they have to undergo.

26. By means of these trials whereinto God leads the soul and the senses, the soul gradually acquires virtues, strength and perfection, together with bitterness, for virtue is made perfect in weakness,<sup>6</sup> and is

<sup>1</sup> S omits: 'on this road.'

<sup>3</sup> C: 'appetites.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg, P: 'refines and purges the spirit.'

<sup>2</sup> Acts xiv, 21 [A.V., xiv, 22].

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: 'unction.'

<sup>6</sup> 2 Corinthians xii, 9.

wrought by the experience of sufferings. For iron cannot adapt itself and be subservient to the intelligence of the artificer, unless he use fire and a hammer, like the fire which Jeremias says that God put into his understanding, saying: 'He sent fire into my bones and taught me.'<sup>1</sup> And Jeremias likewise says of the hammer: 'Thou hast chastised me, Lord, and I was instructed.'<sup>2</sup> Even so says the Preacher: 'He that is not tried, what can he know? And he that hath no experience knoweth little.'<sup>3</sup>

27. And here it behoves us to note the reason why there are so few that attain to this lofty state of the perfection of union with God. It must be known that it is not because God is pleased that there should be few<sup>4</sup> raised to this high spiritual state, for it would rather please Him that all souls should be perfect, but it is rather that He finds few vessels which can bear so high and lofty a work. For, when He proves them in small things and finds them weak and sees that they at once flee from labour, and desire not to submit to the least discomfort or mortification,<sup>5</sup> He finds that they are not strong and faithful in the little things wherein He has granted them the favour of beginning to purge and fashion them, and sees that they will be much less so in great things; so He goes no farther with their purification, neither lifts them up from the dust of the earth, through the labour of mortification, since for this they would need greater constancy and fortitude than they exhibit. And thus there are many who desire to make progress and constantly entreat God to bring them and let them pass to this state of perfection, and when it pleases God to begin to bring them through<sup>6</sup> the first trials and mortifications, as is necessary, they are unwilling to pass through them, and flee away, to escape from the narrow road of life and seek the broad road of their own consolation, which is that of their perdition, and thus they give God no opportunity, refusing to receive what they have asked when He begins to give it to them. And so they are like useless vessels: they would fain arrive at the state of perfection but are unwilling to be led thither by the road of trials which leads to it, nor will they hardly set foot upon that road by submitting to the smallest trials which are those that souls are wont to suffer. To these may be made the reply which we find in Jeremias, in these words: 'If thou hast run with those who went on foot, and hast laboured, how canst thou contend with horses? And as thou hast had

<sup>1</sup> Lamentations i, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiasticus xxxiv, 9-10 [cf. p. 46, n. 6, above].

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P: 'is not pleased that there should be many.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg adds: 'or to work with solid patience.'

<sup>2</sup> Jeremias xxxi, 18.

<sup>6</sup> Bz: 'to fashion them with.'

quietness in the land of peace, how wilt thou do in the pride of Jordan? <sup>1</sup> This is as though he were to say: If in the trials which commonly and ordinarily afflict all those who live this human life thou countedst all as labour, and thoughtest thyself to be running, because thy pace was so slow, how wilt thou be able to keep pace with the step of a horse—that is to say, with trials that are more than ordinary and common, for which is required more than human strength and swiftness? And if thou hast been loth to break away from the peace and pleasure <sup>2</sup> of this land of thine, which is thy sensual nature, and hast not desired to make war against it or to oppose it in any way, I know not how thou wilt desire to enter the impetuous waters of spiritual tribulation and trial, which are more interior.

28. Oh, souls that seek to walk in security and comfort in spiritual things! If ye did but know how necessary it is to suffer and endure in order to reach this security and consolation, and how without this <sup>3</sup> ye cannot attain to that which the soul desires, but will rather go backward, ye would in no way seek consolation, either from God or from the creatures, but would rather bear the cross, and, having embraced it, would desire to drink pure vinegar and gall, and would count this a great happiness, for, being thus dead to the world and to your own selves, ye would live to God in the delights of the spirit; and, bearing a few outward things with patience and faithfulness, ye would become worthy for God to set His eyes upon you, to purge and cleanse you more inwardly by means of more interior spiritual trials, and to give you more interior blessings. For they to whom God is to grant so notable a favour as to tempt them more interiorly, and thus to advance them in gifts and deservings, must have rendered Him many services, and have had much patience and constancy for His sake, and have been very acceptable in His sight in their lives and works. This was true of the holy man Tobias, to whom Saint Raphael said that, because he had been acceptable to God, He had granted him this favour of sending him a temptation that should prove him the more in order that he might exalt him the more. <sup>4</sup> And all that remained to him of life after that temptation caused him joy, as says the Divine Scripture. In the same way we read of holy Job that, when God accepted him as His servant, as He did in the presence of the good and the evil spirits, He then granted him the favour of sending him those great <sup>5</sup> trials, that he

<sup>1</sup> Jeremias xii, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P: 'and if ye did but understand that.'

<sup>4</sup> Tobias xii, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P omit: 'and pleasure.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg, Bz, C, P: 'heavy.'

might afterwards exalt him, as indeed He did, by multiplying blessings to him, both spiritual and temporal.<sup>1</sup>

29. In the same way does God act to those whom He desires to exalt with the most important exaltation; He makes and causes them to be tempted in order that He may raise them as far as is possible—that is, that He may bring them to union with Divine wisdom, which, as David says, is silver tried by the fire and proved in the earth<sup>2</sup> (that is, that of our flesh) and purged seven times, which is the greatest purgation possible. And there is no reason to tarry here any longer in order to describe these seven purgations and to show how each of them leads us to this wisdom, and how there correspond to them seven degrees of love in this wisdom,<sup>3</sup> which in this life is to the soul like that silver spoken of by David, but in the life to come will be to it like gold.

30. It greatly behoves the soul, then, to have much patience and constancy in all the tribulations and trials<sup>4</sup> which God sends it, whether they come from without or from within, and are spiritual or corporeal, greater or lesser. It must take them all as from His hand for its healing and its good, and not flee from them, since they are health<sup>5</sup> to it, but follow the counsel of the Wise Man, who says: 'If the spirit of him that has the power descend upon thee, abandon not thy place'<sup>6</sup> (that is, the place and abode of thy probation, by which is meant that trial that He sends thee); for the healing, he says, will cause great<sup>7</sup> sins to cease. That is, it will cut the roots of thy sins and imperfections, which are evil habits; for battling with trials, perils and temptations quenches the evil and imperfect habits of the soul and purifies and strengthens it. Wherefore the soul must count it a great favour when God sends it interior and exterior trials,<sup>8</sup> realizing that there are very few who deserve to be perfected by suffering, and to suffer that they may come to this lofty state.

31. We return to our exposition. The soul is now aware that all has turned out very well for it, since now *sicut tenebræ ejus, ita et lumen ejus*;<sup>9</sup> and, as the soul aforesaid shared in tribulations, it now shares in consolations and in the kingdom; and as all its trials, within and with-

<sup>1</sup> [Job i, 8; xlii, 12.]

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xi, 7 [A.V., xii, 6].

<sup>3</sup> Bz omits this clause.

<sup>4</sup> Bz abbreviates: 'which in this life consists in the soul's great constancy and patience in all the tribulations and trials.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz: 'sanctity' [*sanctidad* for *sanidad*].

<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiastes x, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Bg, P: 'very great.'

<sup>8</sup> Bg, P: 'sends it trials and temptations.'

<sup>9</sup> Psalm cxxxviii, 12 [A.V., cxxxix, 12].

out, have been amply rewarded by Divine blessings of soul and body, there is none of its trials that has not a correspondingly great reward. And thus the soul confesses that it is now well satisfied, when it says: 'And pays every debt.' In this line it gives thanks to God, even as David gave Him thanks for having delivered him from trials, in that verse where he says: 'Many and grievous are the tribulations that Thou hast shown me, and Thou didst deliver me from them all, and from the depths of the earth hast Thou brought me out again; Thou hast multiplied Thy magnificence, and, turning to me, hast comforted me.'<sup>1</sup> And thus this soul that before reaching this state was without, at the gates of the palace (like Mardochai, sitting weeping in the streets of Susan, because his life was in peril, and clothed in sackcloth, refusing to receive the garments from Queen Esther, and having received no reward for services rendered the King, and his faithfulness in defending his honour and life<sup>2</sup>), is recompensed, like Mardochai, in a single day for all its trials and services, for not only is it made to enter the palace and stand before the King, clad in regal vesture, but likewise it is crowned, and given a sceptre, and a royal seat, and possession of the royal ring, so that it may do all that it desires, and need do naught that it desires not to do in the kingdom of its Spouse; for those that are in this state receive all that they desire. Herein not only is it recompensed, but the Jews, its enemies, are now dead—namely, the imperfect desires that were taking away its spiritual life, wherein it now lives according to its faculties and desires. For this cause the soul next says:

**In slaying, thou hast changed death into life.**

32. For death is naught else than privation of life: when life comes, there remains no trace of death. With respect to the spirit, there are two kinds of life; one is beatific, which consists in seeing God, and this will be attained by means of the natural death of the body, as Saint Paul says in these words: 'We know that if this our house of clay be dissolved, we have a dwelling of God in the heavens.'<sup>3</sup> The other is perfect spiritual life, which is the possession of God through the union of love, and this is attained through the complete mortification of all vices and desires<sup>4</sup> and of the soul's entire nature. And until this be done, the soul cannot attain to the perfection of this spiritual life of union with God, even as the Apostle says likewise in

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxx, 20 [A.V., lxxi, 20-1].

<sup>3</sup> 2 Corinthians v, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Esther. iv, 1-4.

<sup>4</sup> Bz: 'of all its members and desires.'

these words: 'If you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.'<sup>1</sup>

33. It must be known, then, that that which the soul here calls death is all that is meant by the 'old man': namely, the employment of the faculties—memory, understanding and will—and the use and occupation of them in things of the world, and in the desires and pleasures taken in created things. All this is the exercise of the old life, which is the death of the new, or spiritual, life. Herein the soul will be unable to live perfectly if the old man die not perfectly likewise, as the Apostle warns us when he says that we should put off the old man, and put on the new man, who according to the omnipotent God is created in justice and holiness.<sup>2</sup> In this new life, which begins when the soul has reached this perfection of union with God, as we are saying here, all the desires of the soul and its faculties according to its inclinations and operations, which of themselves were the operation of death and the privation of spiritual life, are changed into Divine operations.

34. And as each living creature lives by its operation, as the philosophers say, the soul, having its operations in God, through the union that it has with God, lives the life of God, and thus its death has been changed into life—which is to say that animal<sup>3</sup> life has been changed into spiritual life. For the understanding, which before this union understood in a natural way with the strength and vigour of its natural light, by means of <sup>4</sup> the bodily senses, is now moved and informed by another and a higher principle, that of the supernatural light of God, and, the senses having been set aside, it has thus<sup>5</sup> been changed into the Divine, for through union its understanding and that of God are now both one. And the will, which aforesaid loved after a low manner, that of death,<sup>6</sup> and with its natural affection, has now been changed into the life of Divine love; for it loves after a lofty manner with Divine affection and is moved by the power and strength of the Holy Spirit in Whom it now lives the life of love,<sup>7</sup> since, through this union, its will and His will are now only one. And the memory, which of itself perceived only figures and phantasms of created things, has become changed through this union, so that it has in its mind the eternal years spoken of by David.<sup>8</sup> And the natural desire, which had only capacity and strength to enjoy creature pleasure that works death, is now

<sup>1</sup> Romans viii, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Bg: 'natural.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg, P: 'it thus understands divinely and has thus.'

<sup>6</sup> Bg, P omit: 'that of death.'

<sup>8</sup> Psalm lxxvi, 6 [A.V., lxxvii, 5].

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians iv, 22-4.

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: 'through the life of.'

<sup>7</sup> Bg: 'the life of God.'

changed so that it tastes and enjoys that which is Divine, being now moved and satisfied by another and a more living principle, which is the delight of God; for it is united with Him and thus it is now only the desire of God. And finally, all the movements and operations and inclinations which the soul had aforetime, and which belonged to the principle and strength of its natural life, are now in this union changed into Divine movements, dead to their own operation and inclination and alive in God. For the soul, like the true daughter of God that it now is, is moved wholly by the Spirit of God, even as Saint Paul teaches, saying: 'That they that are moved by the Spirit of God are sons of God Himself.'<sup>1</sup> So, as has been said, the understanding of this soul is now the understanding of God; and its will is the will of God; and its memory is the memory of God; and its delight is the delight of God; and the substance of this soul, although it is not the Substance of God, for into this it cannot be substantially changed, is nevertheless united in Him and absorbed in Him, and is thus God<sup>2</sup> by participation in God, which comes to pass in this perfect state of the spiritual life, although not so perfectly as in the next life. And in this way the soul is dead to all that was in itself, for this was death to it, and alive to that which God is in Himself; wherefore, speaking of itself, the soul well says in this line: 'In slaying, thou hast changed death into life.' Wherefore the soul may here very well say with Saint Paul: 'I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.'<sup>3</sup> In this way the death of this soul is changed into the life of God, and there may also be applied to it the saying of the Apostle: *Absorpta est mors in victoria*.<sup>4</sup> And likewise the words of Osee, the prophet, who, in his own person,<sup>5</sup> says as from God: 'O death, I will be thy death.'<sup>6</sup> This is as though he were to say: I am life, being the death of death, and death shall be absorbed in life.

35. In this wise the soul is absorbed in Divine life, being withdrawn from all that is secular and temporal and from natural desire, and brought into the cellars of the King,<sup>7</sup> where it rejoices and is glad in its beloved, and remembers His breasts more than wine, saying: 'Although I am black, I am beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem; for my natural blackness is changed into the beauty of the heavenly King.'<sup>8</sup>

36. In this state of life, perfect as it is, the soul is, as it were,

<sup>1</sup> Romans viii, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Galatians ii, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Bz: 'in his own presence.'

<sup>7</sup> Bz: 'into the halls of the King.' C: 'into the cellar of the King.' Bg, P: 'into the secret mansion (*morada*) of the King.'

<sup>8</sup> Canticles i, 4.

<sup>2</sup> S: 'and, thus absorbed, has become God.'

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians xv, 54.

<sup>6</sup> Osee xiii, 14.

interiorly and exteriorly keeping festival, and has in its mouth,<sup>1</sup> which is its spirit, a great song of joy to God, as it were a song new and ever new, turned into joy and love, having knowledge of its happy state. At times it has rejoicing and fruition, saying within its spirit those words of Job, namely: 'My glory shall be always renewed and as a palm tree shall I multiply my days.'<sup>2</sup> Which is as much as to say: God Who, remaining within Himself unchangeably, makes all things new, as the Wise Man says, being united for ever in my glory,<sup>3</sup> will make my glory ever new—that is to say, He will not suffer it to grow old as it was before; and I shall multiply my days like the palm tree—that is, my merits unto Heaven, even as the palm tree sends out its branches to Heaven. For the merits of the soul that is in this state are ordinarily great in number and quality, and it is accustomed to sing to God in its spirit of all that David says in the Psalm which begins *Exaltabo te, Domine, quoniam suscepisti me*, particularly those last two verses, which say: *Convertisti planctum meum in gaudium mihi, etc., conscidisti saccum meum, et circumdediti me laetitia.*<sup>4</sup> That my glory may sing to Thee, and I may not be ashamed.<sup>5</sup> O Lord my God, I will praise Thee for ever. And it is no marvel that the soul should experience with such frequency these joys,<sup>6</sup> this jubilation and this fruition, and should make these praises to God, for, apart from the knowledge which it has of the favours that it has received,<sup>7</sup> it now feels God to be so solicitous in granting it favours, and addressing it in such precious and delicate<sup>8</sup> and endearing words, and magnifying it with favour upon favour, that it believes that He has no other soul in the world to favour thus, nor aught else wherewith to occupy Himself, but that He is wholly for itself alone. And, when it feels this, it confesses its feeling like the Bride in the words of the Songs: *Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi.*<sup>9</sup>

### STANZA III

Oh, lamps of fire, In whose splendours the deep caverns of  
sense which were dark and blind  
With strange brightness Give heat and light together to their  
Beloved!

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'palate.']

<sup>2</sup> Job xxix, 18, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'being now thus prevented in my glory.'

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xxix, 12 [A.V., xxx, 11].

<sup>5</sup> C gives these words in Latin only.

<sup>6</sup> Bg, P: 'that with such great faith the soul should be enkindled in these joys.'

<sup>7</sup> S: 'that it has known and received.'

<sup>8</sup> Bz: 'and delectable.'

<sup>9</sup> Canticles ii, 16.

## EXPOSITION

**M**AY God be pleased to grant me His favour here, for in truth it is very<sup>1</sup> needful if I am to explain the profound meaning of this stanza: and he that reads it will need to give it his attention, for, if he have no experience of this, it will perhaps be somewhat obscure and prolix to him, though, if he should have such experience, it will perchance be clear and pleasing. In this stanza, the soul magnifies its Spouse and gives Him thanks for the great favours which it receives from the union that it has with Him, by means whereof it says here that it receives abundant and great knowledge of Himself, all full of love, wherewith the faculties and senses, which, before this union, were dark and blind, have been enlightened and enkindled with love, and can now be illumined, as indeed they are, and through the heat of love can give light and love to Him Who illumined and enamoured<sup>2</sup> them. For the true lover is content only when all that he is in himself, and all that he is worth, and all that he has and receives, are employed in the Beloved; and the more of this there is, the greater is the pleasure that he receives in giving it. In this the soul here rejoices, because with the splendours and the love that it receives it will be able to shine resplendently before its Beloved and to love Him. There follows the line:

**Oh, lamps of fire,**

2. In the first place it must be known that lamps have two properties, which are to give light and heat. In order to understand the nature of these lamps whereof the soul here speaks, and how they give light and burn within it and give it heat, it must be known that God, in His one and simple Being, is all the virtues and grandeurs of His attributes; for He is omnipotent, wise, good, merciful, just, strong and loving,<sup>3</sup> and so forth, and has other infinite attributes and virtues<sup>4</sup> whereof we have no knowledge; and, as He is all these things in His simple Being, when He is united with the soul, at the time when He is pleased to reveal knowledge to it, it is able to see in Him all these virtues and grandeurs distinctly<sup>5</sup>—namely, omnipotence, wisdom and goodness; mercy, and so forth. And, as each of these things is the very Being of God in one sole reality, which is the Father or the Son or the Holy

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P omit 'very.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P omit: 'and loving.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz omits: 'distinctly.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P omit: 'and enamoured.'

<sup>4</sup> S omits: 'and virtues.'

Spirit, each attribute being God Himself and God being infinite light and infinite Divine fire, as we have said above, it follows from this that, in each of these innumerable attributes, He gives light and heat as God,<sup>1</sup> and thus each of these attributes is a lamp which gives the soul light and gives it also the heat of love.

3. And inasmuch as in a single act of this union the soul receives the knowledge of these attributes, God Himself is<sup>2</sup> to the soul as many lamps all together, each of which, in a distinct way, gives light to it in wisdom and gives it heat, for from each lamp the soul has distinct knowledge and by each is enkindled in love. And thus with respect to all these lamps individually the soul loves and is enkindled<sup>3</sup> by each, as also by all of them together, for, as we have said, all these attributes are one being; and thus all these lamps are one lamp, which, according to its virtues and attributes, gives light and heat as many lamps. Wherefore the soul, in a single act of knowledge of these lamps, loves through each one, and herein loves through all of them together, and in that act bears the quality of love through each one, and of each one, and of all together, and through all together. For the splendour given it by this lamp of the Being of God, inasmuch as He is omnipotent, gives it the light and heat of the love of God inasmuch as He is omnipotent. And therefore God is now to the soul a lamp of omnipotence, giving it light and all knowledge<sup>4</sup> according to this attribute. And the splendour given it by this lamp according to the Being of God, inasmuch as He is knowledge, sheds on it the light and heat of the love of God inasmuch as He is wise; and therefore God is now to it a lamp of wisdom. And the splendour given it by this lamp of God inasmuch as He is goodness<sup>5</sup> sheds upon the soul the light and heat of the love of God inasmuch as He is good; and accordingly God is now to it a lamp of goodness. And, in the same way, He is to it a lamp of justice, and of fortitude, and of mercy, and of all the other attributes that in this state are represented to the soul together in God. And the light that the soul receives from them all together is communicated to it by the heat of the love of God wherewith the soul loves God because He is all these things; and thus in this communication and manifestation of Himself that God makes to the soul (which, as I think, is the greatest that He

<sup>1</sup> Bg: 'in each of these attributes, which, as we said, are innumerable, and are His virtues, He gives light and heat as God.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'He is.'

<sup>3</sup> So C, S. Bz: 'the soul is enkindled.' Bg, P: 'And thus with respect to all these lamps the soul understands and loves and is enkindled.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: 'light, love and all knowledge.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz: 'truth.'

can make to it in this life), He is to it as innumerable lamps which give it knowledge and love of Him.

4. These lamps were seen by Moses on Mount Sinai, where, when God passed by,<sup>1</sup> he fell prostrate on the ground, and began to cry out and to proclaim some of these attributes, saying: 'Emperor, Lord, God that art merciful, clement, patient, of much compassion, true, that keepest mercy for thousands, that takest away sins<sup>2</sup> and evil deeds and faults, so that there is no man who of himself is innocent before Thee.'<sup>3</sup> Herein it is clear that the majority of the attributes and virtues of God which Moses then learned in God were those of God's omnipotence, dominion, deity, mercy, justice, truth and uprightness; which was a most profound knowledge of God; and since, according to that knowledge,<sup>4</sup> love was likewise communicated to him, the delight of love and the fruition that he experienced therein were most sublime.

5. From this it follows that the delight which the soul receives in the rapture of love communicated by the fire of the light of these lamps is wondrous, and boundless, being as vast as that of many lamps, each of which burns in love, the warmth of one being added to the warmth of another, and the flame of one to the flame of another, as also the light of one to the light of another, so that any attribute is known by any other; and thus all of them become one light and one fire, and each of them becomes one light and one fire. The soul, then, is here completely absorbed in these delicate flames, and wounded subtly by love in each of them, and in all of them together more wounded and deeply alive in the love of the life of God, so that it can see quite clearly that that love belongs to life eternal, which is the union of all blessings. So that the soul in that state in some wise perceives and knows well the truth of those words of the Spouse in the Songs, where He said that the lamps of love were lamps of fire and flames. 'Beauteous art thou in thy footsteps and thy shoes, oh, prince's daughter.'<sup>5</sup> Who can recount the magnificence and rarity of thy delight and majesty in the wondrous splendour and the love of thy lamps?

6. Divine Scripture relates that of old one of these lamps passed before Abraham and caused him the greatest darksome horror, because the lamp was that of the rigorous justice which He was about to work

<sup>1</sup> Bg: 'when God passed quickly before him.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'the sins of the world.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P add: 'of God.'

<sup>3</sup> Exodus xxxiv, 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> Canticles vii, 1.

in the sight of the Chanaanites.<sup>1</sup> Then, oh soul so greatly enriched, shall not all these lamps of the knowledge of God which give thee a pleasant and loving light cause thee more light and joy of love than that single lamp caused horror and darkness in Abraham? And how great and how excellent and how manifold shall be thy joy, since in it all and from it all thou receivest fruition and love, and God communicates Himself to thy faculties according to His attributes and virtues? For, when a man loves another and does him good, he does him good and loves him according to his own attributes and properties. And thus thy Spouse, being as Who He is within thee, grants thee favours; for, since He is omnipotent, He does good to thee and loves thee with omnipotence; and since He is wise, thou perceivest that He does thee good and loves thee with wisdom; and, since He is infinitely good, thou perceivest that He loves thee with goodness; since He is holy, thou perceivest that He loves thee and grants thee favours with holiness; since He is just, thou perceivest that He loves thee and grants thee favours justly; since He is merciful, compassionate and clement, thou perceivest His mercy, compassion and clemency; and, since His Being is strong and sublime and delicate, thou perceivest that He loves thee with strength, sublimity and delicacy; and, since He is clean and pure, thou perceivest that He loves thee with cleanness and purity; and, since He is true, thou perceivest that He loves thee truly; and, since He is liberal, thou knowest that He loves thee and grants thee favours with liberality, without self-interest,<sup>2</sup> solely that He may do thee good; as He is the virtue of the greatest humility, He loves thee with the greatest humility, and with the greatest esteem, making thee His equal, joyfully revealing Himself to thee,<sup>3</sup> in these ways, which are His knowledge, by means of this His countenance full of graces, and saying to thee, in this His union, not without great rejoicing on thy part; I am thine and for thee, and I delight to be such as I am that I may be thine to give Myself to thee.

7. Who, then, can describe that which thou perceivest, oh, blessed soul, when thou knowest thyself to be thus loved and to be exalted with such esteem? Thy belly, which is thy will, is like that of the Bride, and as the heap of wheat which is covered and set about with lilies.<sup>4</sup> For in these grains of the wheat of the bread of life<sup>5</sup> which thou art tasting

<sup>1</sup> Genesis xv, 12-17.

<sup>2</sup> C: 'with liberality, feeling no impediment or self-interest.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz adds: 'in this union.'

<sup>4</sup> Canticles vii, 2.

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'grains of bread of life.']

all together, the lilies of the virtues that surround thee are giving thee delight. For these are the King's daughters, of whom David says that they have delighted thee<sup>1</sup> with myrrh and ambar and other aromatic spices, for the communications of knowledge given thee by the Beloved concerning His graces and virtues are His daughters; and thou art so wholly engulfed and absorbed in them that thou art also the well of living waters that run with vehemence from Mount Libanus, which is God,<sup>2</sup> in the which stream thou art become marvellously glad with all the harmony of thy soul and even of thy body, which has become a Paradise watered by springs Divine.<sup>3</sup> Thus may the words of the Psalm be accomplished in thee, namely: 'The vehemence of the river makes glad the city of God.'<sup>4</sup>

8. Oh, wondrous thing! At this time the soul is overflowing with Divine waters, which flow from it as from an abundant source whose Divine waters gush in all directions. For, although it is true that this communication of which we are speaking is light and fire from these lamps of God, yet this fire, as we have said, is here so sweet that, vast as it is, it is like the waters of life which quench the thirst of the spirit with the vehemence that it desires. So these lamps of fire are living waters of the spirit, like those that came upon the Apostles,<sup>5</sup> which, though they were lamps of fire, were also pure and clear water, as the prophet Ezechiel called them when he prophesied that coming of the Holy Spirit, saying: 'I will pour out upon you, saith God, clean water, and will put My spirit in the midst of you.'<sup>6</sup> And thus this fire is likewise water, for this fire is pre-figured in the sacrificial fire that Jeremias hid in the cistern, which was water when it was hidden and fire when they brought it out for the sacrifice.<sup>7</sup> And thus this spirit of God, while hidden in the veins of the soul, is like sweet and delectable water quenching the thirst of the spirit; and, when the soul offers the sacrifice of love to God, it becomes living flames of fire, which are the lamps<sup>8</sup> of the act of love and of the flames to which we referred above as being described by the Spouse in the Songs. For this reason the soul here calls them flames. For not only does it taste them as waters within itself, but it likewise offers them as an act of love to God like flames. And, inasmuch as in the spiritual communication of these lamps the soul is enkindled and set in the exercise of love, in an act of love it

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'that they delight thee in thy love.'

<sup>2</sup> Canticles iv, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xlv, 5 [A.V., xlv, 4].

<sup>6</sup> Ezechiel xxxvi, 25.

<sup>8</sup> Bz: 'flames.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'a paradise of Divine rejoicing.'

<sup>5</sup> Acts ii, 3.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Machabees i, 20-22. [Cf. p. 58, n. 2, above.]

calls them lamps rather than flames, saying: 'Oh, lamps of fire.' All that can be said in this stanza<sup>1</sup> is less than what there is to be said, for the transformation of the soul in God is indescribable. It can all be expressed in this word—namely, that the soul has become God of God by participation in Him and in His attributes, which are those that are here called lamps of fire.

### In whose splendours

9. In order to explain the nature of these splendours of the lamps whereof the soul here speaks and the way wherein the soul shines forth in splendour, we must first make it clear that these splendours are the communications of loving knowledge which the lamps of the attributes of God give forth to the soul, wherein the soul, united according to its faculties, also shines forth like them, being transformed into loving splendours. This brilliance of splendour wherein the soul shines forth with the heat of love is not like that produced by material lamps, which burst into flame and thus illumine the things around them, but is like that of the brilliance within the flames. For the soul is within these splendours, wherefore it says: 'In whose splendours': that is to say, it is 'within' them; and not only so, but, as we have said, it is transformed and turned into splendours. And so we shall say that it is like the air which is within the flame and is enkindled and transformed into flame, for flame is naught else but enkindled air, and the movements made and the splendours produced by this flame are not simply of air, nor simply of the fire, whereof it is composed, but of air and fire together, and the fire causes this union with the air that is enkindled within it.

10. And in this way we shall understand that the soul with its faculties is enlightened within the splendours of God. And the movements of this Divine flame, which are the vibrations and the bursts of flame which we have described above, are not made only by the soul that is transformed in the flames of the Holy Spirit, neither are they made by Him alone; but by the Spirit and the soul together, the Spirit moving the soul, even as the fire moves the air that is enkindled. And thus these movements of God and the soul together are not only splendours, but are also glorifications in the soul. For these movements and bursts of flame are the playing of the fire<sup>2</sup> and the joyful festivals which we said, in the second line of the first stanza, the Holy Spirit

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'in this matter.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'are the fires and the playing [of the fires].'

causes within the soul, wherein it seems that He is ever about to grant it eternal life and remove it to His perfect glory, and make it at last to enter truly within Himself. For all the blessings, both the early and the late, the great and the small, that God grants the soul He grants to it always with the motive of bringing it to eternal life,<sup>1</sup> just as all the movements made and the bursts of flame produced by the enkindled air have the purpose of bringing it to the centre of its sphere; and all these movements that it makes are attempts to bring it there. But, because the air is in the sphere proper to it, it cannot bring it; just so, although these movements<sup>2</sup> of the Holy Spirit are most effective in absorbing the soul into great glory, yet this is not perfectly accomplished until the time comes for the soul to leave the sphere of air—which is this life of the flesh—and to enter into the centre of its spirit, which is perfect life in Christ.

11. But it must be understood that these movements<sup>3</sup> are movements of the soul rather than of God; for God moves not. And so these glimpses of glory that are given to the soul are stable, perfect and continuous, with firm serenity<sup>4</sup> in God, as they will also be in the soul hereafter, without any change between greater and lesser, and without any intervening movements; and then the soul will see clearly how, although here below it appeared that God was moving in it, God moves not in Himself, even as the fire moves not in its sphere; and how, since it was not perfect in glory, it had those movements and bursts of flame in a foretaste of glory.<sup>5</sup>

12. From what has been said, and from what we shall now say, it will be more clearly understood how great is the excellence of the splendours of these lamps which we are describing, for these splendours by another name are called overshadowings. To understand this it must be understood that 'overshadowing' signifies 'casting of a shadow,' and for a man to cast his shadow over another signifies that he protects him, befriends him and grants him favours. When the shadow covers the person, this is a sign that he who overshadows him is now near to befriend and protect him. For this reason that great favour which God granted to the Virgin Mary—namely, her conception of the Son of God—was called by the angel Saint Gabriel an overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. 'The Holy Spirit,' he said, 'shall

<sup>1</sup> Bz: 'to eternal glory.'

<sup>2</sup> P, S: 'these motives.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg adds: 'of the flame.' P adds: 'of the soul.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P have 'sweetness' for 'serenity.' [The first redaction (p. 59, above) has 'not' before 'stable.']

<sup>5</sup> Bg, P add: 'even as the stars twinkle from afar.'

come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.<sup>1</sup>

13. For the better understanding of the nature of this casting of a shadow by God, or (which is the same thing) these overshadowings of great splendours, it must be understood that everything has and makes a shadow in conformity with its nature and size. If the thing is opaque and dark<sup>2</sup> it makes a dark shadow,<sup>3</sup> and if it is light and fine<sup>4</sup> it makes a light and fine shadow: and thus the shadow of an object which is dark<sup>5</sup> will be a dark shadow of the size of that dark object, and the shadow of a light object<sup>6</sup> will be a light shadow of the size of that light object.

14. Now, inasmuch as these virtues and attributes of God are enkindled and resplendent lamps, and are near to the soul, as we have said, they will not fail to touch the soul with their shadows, which will be enkindled and resplendent likewise, even as are the lamps by which they are cast, and thus these shadows will be splendours. In this way the shadow cast upon the soul by the lamp of the beauty of God will be other beauty, of the nature and proportions of that beauty of God; and the shadow cast by strength will be other strength of the proportions of the strength of God; and the shadow cast by the wisdom of God will be other wisdom<sup>7</sup> of God, of the proportions of that wisdom of God. And so with the remaining lamps; or, more correctly, it will be the same wisdom and the same beauty and the same strength of God, in shadow, for here on earth the soul cannot perfectly comprehend it,<sup>8</sup> and since this shadow is in such conformity with the nature and proportions of God—that is, with God Himself<sup>9</sup>—the soul has, in shadow, an effective realization of God's excellence.

15. What, then, will be the shadows that the Holy Spirit will cast upon this soul—namely, the shadows of the grandeurs of His virtues and attributes? For He is so near to the soul that He not only touches it in shadows, but is united with it in shadows and splendours, and it understands and experiences God in each of them according to His nature and proportions in each of them? For it understands and experiences Divine power<sup>10</sup> in the shadow of omnipotence; and it understands and experiences Divine wisdom in the shadow of Divine

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke i, 35.

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'small and dark.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'a small and dark shadow.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: 'clear and light.' Bz, C: 'clear, light and fine.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'of a darkness.']

<sup>6</sup> [*Lit.*, 'of a light.']

<sup>7</sup> Bg, C, P omit: 'of God.'

<sup>8</sup> Bg, P read: 'and, more correctly, it will be the same beauty of God, in shadow, for the soul, although perfect, cannot comprehend it.'

<sup>9</sup> Bg, P omit this parenthetical clause.

<sup>10</sup> Bg: 'Divine omnipotence.'

wisdom; understands and experiences infinite goodness in the shadow of infinite goodness which surrounds it<sup>1</sup>; and so forth. Finally, it experiences the glory of God in the shadow of glory, which causes it to know the nature and proportions of the glory of God when all these pass by in bright and enkindled shadows cast by these bright and enkindled lamps, all of which are in one lamp of one single and simple Being of God, which actually shines forth upon it in all these ways.

16. Oh, what the soul will feel here, when it experiences the knowledge and communication of that figure which Ezechiel saw in that beast with four faces, and in that wheel<sup>2</sup> with four wheels, when he saw that its appearance was as the appearance of kindled coals and as the appearance of lamps!<sup>3</sup> The soul will see the wheel, which is the wisdom of God, full of eyes within and without, which are Divine manifestations of knowledge and the splendours of His virtues, and will hear in its spirit that sound made by their passage, which was like the sound of a multitude and of great armies,<sup>4</sup> signifying many grandeurs of God, of which the soul here has distinct knowledge in one single sound of God's passing through it. Finally, it will experience that sound of the beating of wings, which the Prophet says was as the sound of many waters and as the sound of the Most High God<sup>5</sup>; this indicates the vehemence of the Divine waters, which we have described, and which, at the beating of the wings of the Holy Spirit, overwhelm the soul and make it to rejoice in the flame of love, so that it now enjoys the glory of God in His likeness and shadow,<sup>6</sup> even as this Prophet says that the visions of that beast and that wheel were similitudes of the glory of the Lord.<sup>7</sup> And to what a height may this happy soul now find itself raised! How greatly will it know itself to be exalted! How wondrous will it see itself to be in holy beauty! How far beyond all telling! For so copiously does it become assailed by the waters of these Divine splendours that it is able to see that the Eternal Father, with bounteous hand,<sup>8</sup> has granted it the upper and the lower streams that water the earth, even as the father of Axa gave these to her when she longed for them,<sup>9</sup> for these irrigating waters penetrate both soul and body, which are the upper and the nether parts of man.

17. Oh, wondrous excellence of God that these lamps of the Divine

<sup>1</sup> C omits: 'in the shadow . . . surrounds it.'

<sup>3</sup> C has only: 'was as the appearance of coals.'

<sup>4</sup> P: 'and of servants.'

<sup>6</sup> Bg: 'likeness and the favour of His shadow.'

<sup>7</sup> C: 'of the wheel of the Lord' [cf. Ezechiel i, 28].

<sup>8</sup> Bg, P omit: 'with bounteous hand.'

<sup>9</sup> [Judges i, 15. Cf. p. 62, n. 1, above.]

<sup>2</sup> C: 'that cart.'

<sup>5</sup> [Ezechiel i, 15-25.]

attributes should be one simple being in which alone they are experienced, and yet that they should be distinctly seen,<sup>1</sup> each being as completely enkindled as the other and each being substantially the other! Oh, abyss of delights, that art the more abundant in proportion as thy riches are gathered together in the infinite simplicity and unity of Thy sole Being, so that each one is known and experienced in such a way that the perfect knowledge and absorption of the other is not impeded thereby, but rather each grace and virtue that exists in thee is light that comes from some other of thy grandeurs, so that through thy purity, oh, Divine wisdom, many things are seen in thee when one thing is seen, since thou art the store-house of the treasures of the Father, the splendour of eternal light, a stainless mirror and image of His goodness.<sup>2</sup> For in thy splendours are

### The deep caverns of sense

18. These caverns are the faculties of the soul—memory, understanding and will—of which the depth is proportionate to their capacity for great blessings, for they can be filled with nothing less than the infinite. But considering what they suffer when they are empty we can realize in some measure the greatness of their joy and delight when they are filled with God, for one contrary can give light to another.<sup>3</sup> In the first place, it must be noted that these caverns of the faculties, when they are not empty and purged and cleansed from all creature affection, are not conscious of their great emptiness, which is due to their profound capacity. For in this life any trifle that remains within them suffices to keep them so cumbered and fascinated that they are neither conscious of their loss nor do they miss the immense blessings that might be theirs, nor are they aware of their own capacity.<sup>4</sup> And it is a wondrous thing that, despite their capacity for infinite blessing, the least thing suffices to cumber them, so that they cannot receive these blessings until they are completely empty, as we shall say hereafter. But, when they are empty and clean, the hunger and thirst and yearning of their spiritual sense become intolerable; for, as the capacities<sup>5</sup> of these caverns are deep, their pain is deep likewise, as is also the food that they lack, which, as I say, is God. And this great feeling of pain commonly occurs towards the close of the illumination and purification of the soul, ere it attain to union, wherein it<sup>6</sup> has satisfaction. For,

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'seen and experienced.' Bz: 'seen and enjoyed.'

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom vii, 26

<sup>4</sup> Bz omits the last clause.

<sup>6</sup> Bg, P: 'wherein that spiritual appetite.'

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. p. 27, l. 1, above.]

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the stomachs.']

when the spiritual appetite is empty and purged from every creature and from every creature affection, and its natural temper is lost and it has become attempered to the Divine, and its emptiness is disposed to be filled, and when the Divine communication of union with God has not yet reached it, then the suffering caused by this emptiness and thirst is worse than death, especially when the soul is vouchsafed some foresight or glimpse of the Divine ray and this is not communicated to it.<sup>1</sup> It is souls in this condition that suffer with impatient love, so that they cannot remain long without either receiving or dying.

19. With respect to the first cavern which we here describe—namely, the understanding—its emptiness is thirst for God, and, when the understanding is made ready for God, this is so great that David compares it to that of the hart, finding no greater thirst wherewith to compare it, for the thirst of the hart is said to be most vehement. ‘Even as the hart (says David) desires the fountains of the waters, even so does my soul desire Thee, O God.’<sup>2</sup> This thirst is for the waters of the wisdom of God, which is the object of the understanding.

20. The second cavern is the will, and the emptiness thereof is hunger for God, so great that it causes the soul to swoon,<sup>3</sup> even as David says, in these words: ‘My soul desires and faints for the tabernacles of the Lord.’<sup>4</sup> And this hunger is for the perfection of love to which the soul aspires.

21. The third cavern is the memory, whereof the emptiness is the melting away and languishing of the soul for the possession of God, as Jeremias notes in these words: *Memoria memor ero et tabescet in me anima mea.*<sup>5</sup> That is: With remembrance I shall remember, and I shall remember Him well and my soul shall melt away within me; turning over these things in my heart, I shall live in hope of God.

22. The capacity of these caverns, then, is deep; for that which they are capable of containing, which is God, is deep and infinite<sup>6</sup>; and thus in a certain sense their capacity will be infinite, and likewise their thirst will be infinite, and their hunger also will be infinite and deep, and their languishing<sup>7</sup> and pain are infinite death. For, although the soul suffers not so intensely as in the next life, it suffers nevertheless a vivid image of that infinite privation, since it is to a certain extent

<sup>1</sup> Bz: ‘and the Divine, in union with God, is not communicated to it.’ Bg, P: ‘and God communicates not Himself to it.’

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xli, 1 [A.V., xlii, 1].

<sup>3</sup> C abbreviates: ‘and the emptiness thereof causes the soul to swoon.’

<sup>4</sup> Psalm lxxiii, 3 [A.V., lxxxiv, 2].

<sup>5</sup> Lamentations iii, 20–1.

<sup>6</sup> S: ‘is deep in infinite goodness.’

<sup>7</sup> C: ‘their swooning.’

prepared to receive fullness; although this suffering is of another kind, for it dwells in the bosom of the love of the will, and this love does not alleviate the pain; for the greater is the love, the greater is the impatience of the soul for the possession of its God, for Whom it hopes continually with intense desire.

23. But, seeing it is certain that, when the soul desires God with entire<sup>1</sup> truth, it already (as Saint Gregory says in writing of Saint John<sup>2</sup>) possesses Him Whom it loves, how comes it, O God, that it yearns for Him Whom it already possesses? For, in the desire which, as Saint Peter says,<sup>3</sup> the angels have to see the Son of God, there is neither pain nor yearning, since they possess Him already; so it seems that, if the soul possesses God more completely according as it desires Him more earnestly, the possession of God should give delight and satisfaction to the soul. Even so the angels have delight when they are fulfilling their desire in possession, and satisfying their soul continually with desire, yet have none of the weariness that comes from satiety; wherefore, since they have no weariness, they continually desire, and because they have possession they have no pain. Thus, the greater is the desire of the soul in this state, the more satisfaction and desire it should experience, since it has the more of God and has not grief or pain.

24. In this matter, however, it is well to note clearly the difference that exists between the possession of God through grace itself alone and the possession of Him through union; for the one consists in deep mutual love, but in the other there is also communication. There is as great a difference between these states as there is between betrothal and marriage. For in betrothal there is only a consent by agreement, and a unity of will between the two parties, and the jewels and the adornment of the bride-to-be, given her graciously by the bridegroom. But in marriage there is likewise communication between the persons, and union. During the betrothal, although from time to time the bridegroom sees the bride and gives her gifts, as we have said, there is no union between them, for that is the end<sup>4</sup> of betrothal. Even so, when the soul has attained to such purity in itself and in its faculties that the will is well purged<sup>5</sup> of other strange tastes and desires, according to its lower and higher parts, and when it has given its consent to God with respect to all this, and the will of God and of the soul are as one in a

<sup>1</sup> Bz: 'intense.'

<sup>2</sup> 1 St. Peter i, 12.

<sup>3</sup> S: 'is very pure and well purged.'

<sup>4</sup> Hom. XXX in Evang.

<sup>5</sup> S reads: 'nor is that the end.'

free consent of their own,<sup>1</sup> then it has attained to the possession of God through grace of will, in so far as can be by means of will and grace; and this signifies that God has given it, through its own consent, His true and entire consent, which comes through His grace.

25. And this is the lofty state of spiritual betrothal of the soul with the Word,<sup>2</sup> wherein the Spouse grants the soul great favours, and visits it most lovingly and frequently, wherein the soul receives great favours and delights. But these have nothing to do with those of marriage, for the former are all preparations for the union of marriage; and, though it is true that they come to the soul when it is completely purged from all creature affection (for spiritual betrothal, as we say, cannot take place until this happens), nevertheless the soul has need of other and positive preparations on the part of God, of His visits and gifts whereby He purifies the soul ever more completely and beautifies and refines it so that it may be fitly prepared for such high union. In some souls more time is necessary than in others, for God works here according to the state of the soul. This is prefigured in those maidens who were chosen for King Assuerus<sup>3</sup>; although they had been taken from their own countries and from their fathers' houses, yet, before they were sent to the king's bed, they were kept waiting for a year, albeit within the enclosure of the palace. For one half of the year they were prepared with certain ointments of myrrh and other spices, and for the other half of the year with other and choicer ointments, after which they went to the king's bed.<sup>4</sup>

26. During the time, then, of this betrothal and expectation of marriage in the unctions of the Holy Spirit, when there are choicest ointments<sup>5</sup> preparing the soul for union with God, the yearnings of the caverns of the soul are wont to be extreme and delicate. For, as those ointments are a most proximate preparation for union with God, because they are nearest to God and for this cause make the soul more desirous of Him and inspire it with a more delicate affection for Him, the desire is more delicate and also deeper; for the desire for God is a preparation for union with God.

27. Oh, how good a place would this be to warn souls whom God is leading to these delicate anointings<sup>6</sup> to take care what they are doing and into whose hands they commit themselves, lest they go backward,

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'in a consent that is ready and free.'

<sup>2</sup> P: 'with God the Word.' Bg: 'with the Word, God.'

<sup>3</sup> Esther ii, 12.

<sup>4</sup> Bz omits: 'after which . . . bed.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg, P: 'when there are now the choicest ointments.'

<sup>6</sup> Bz: 'unions.'

were not this beyond the limits of that whereof we are speaking! But such is the compassion and pity that fills my heart when I see souls going backward, and not only failing to submit themselves to the anointing of the spirit so that they may make progress therein, but even losing the effects of that anointing of God which they have received, that I must not fail to warn them here as to what they should do in order to avoid such loss, even though this should cause us to delay the return to our subject a little. I shall return to it shortly, and indeed all this will help us to understand the properties of these caverns. And since it is very necessary; not only for these souls that prosper on this way but also for all the rest who seek their Beloved, I am anxious to describe it.

28. First, it must be known that, if a soul is seeking God, its Beloved<sup>1</sup> is seeking it much more; and, if it sends after Him its loving desires, which are as fragrant to Him as a pillar of smoke that issues from the aromatic spices of myrrh and incense,<sup>2</sup> He likewise sends after it the fragrance of His ointments, wherewith He attracts the soul and causes it to run after Him. These ointments are His Divine inspirations and touches, which, whenever they are His, are ordered<sup>3</sup> and ruled with respect to the perfection of the law of God and of faith, in which perfection the soul must ever draw nearer and nearer to God. And thus the soul must understand that the desire of God in all the favours that He bestows upon it in the unctions<sup>4</sup> and fragrance of His ointments is to prepare it for other choicer and more delicate ointments which have been made more after the temper of God, until it reaches such a delicate and pure state of preparation that it merits union with God and substantial transformation in all its faculties.<sup>5</sup>

29. When, therefore, the soul reflects that God is the principal agent in this matter, and the guide of its blind self, Who will take it by the hand and lead it where it could not of itself go (namely, to the supernatural things which neither its understanding nor its will nor its memory could know as they are), then its chief care will be to see that it sets no obstacle in the way of Him that guides it upon the road which God has ordained for it, in the perfection of the law of God and faith,<sup>6</sup> as we are saying. And this impediment may come to the soul if it allows itself to be led and guided by another blind guide; and the blind guides that might lead it out of its way are three, namely, the

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'its Beloved, God.'

<sup>2</sup> Canticles iii, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'are anointed.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz: 'communications.' C: 'unions.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg, P omit: 'in all its faculties.'

<sup>6</sup> Bz: 'of the love of God and of the law and of faith.'

spiritual director, the devil and its own self. And, that the soul may understand how this is, we will treat shortly of each of them.<sup>1</sup>

30. With regard to the first of these, it is of great importance for the soul that desires to make progress in recollection and perfection to consider in whose hands it is placing itself; for, as is the master, so will be the disciple, and, as is the father, so will be the son. And let it be noted there is hardly anyone who in all respects will guide the soul perfectly along the highest stretch of the road, or even along the intermediate stretches, for it is needful that such a guide should be experienced as well as wise and discreet. The fundamental requirement of a guide in spiritual things is knowledge and discretion; yet, if a guide have no experience of the nature of pure and true spirituality, he will be unable to direct<sup>2</sup> the soul therein, when God permits it to attain so far, nor will he even understand it.

31. In this way many spiritual masters<sup>3</sup> do much harm to many souls, for, not themselves understanding the ways and properties of the spirit, they commonly cause souls to lose the unction of these delicate ointments, wherewith the Holy Spirit gradually anoints and prepares them for Himself, and instruct them by other and lower means which they have used and of which they have read here and there, and which are unsuitable save for beginners. They themselves know no more than how to deal with these—please God they may know even so much!—and refuse to allow souls to go beyond these rudimentary acts of meditation and imagination, even though God is seeking to lead them farther, so that they may never exceed or depart from their natural capacity, whereby a soul can achieve very little.

32. And in order that we may better understand the characteristics of beginners, we must know that the state and exercise of beginners is one of meditation and of the making of discursive exercises and acts with the imagination. In this state, it is necessary for the soul to be given material for meditation and reasoning, and it is well for it to make interior acts on its own account, and even in spiritual things to take advantage of the sweetness and pleasure<sup>4</sup> which come from sense; for, if the desire is fed with pleasure in spiritual things, it becomes detached from pleasure in sensual things and wearies of things of the world. But when to some extent the desire has been fed, and in some sense habituated to spiritual things, and has acquired some

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'of each of these blind guides.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'to examine' [*examinar* for *encaminar*].

<sup>3</sup> Bg: 'fathers.'

<sup>4</sup> C: 'the fervour, favour and pleasure.'

fortitude and constancy, God then begins, as they say, to wean the soul and bring it into the state of contemplation, which in some persons is wont to happen very quickly, especially in religious, because these, having renounced<sup>1</sup> things of the world, quickly attune their senses and desires to God, and their exercises become spiritual through God's working in them; this happens when the discursive acts and the meditation of the soul itself cease, and the first fervours and sweetness of sense cease likewise, so that the soul cannot meditate as before, or find any help in the senses; for the senses remain in a state of aridity, inasmuch as their treasure is transformed into spirit, and no longer falls within the capacity of sense. And, as all the operations which the soul can perform on its own account naturally depend upon sense only, it follows that God is the agent in this state and the soul is the recipient; for the soul behaves only as one that receives and as one in whom these things are being wrought; and God as One that gives and acts and as One that works these things in the soul, giving it spiritual blessings in contemplation, which is Divine love and knowledge in one—that is, a loving knowledge, wherein the soul has not to use its natural acts and reasonings,<sup>2</sup> for it can no longer enter into them as before.

33. It follows that at this time the soul must be led in a way entirely contrary to the way wherein it was led at first. If formerly it was given material for meditation, and practised meditation, this material must now be taken from it and it must not meditate; for, as I say, it will be unable to do so even though it would, and, instead of becoming recollected, it will become distracted. And if formerly it sought sweetness and love and fervour, and found it, now it must neither seek it nor desire it, for not only will it be unable to find it through its own diligence, but it will rather find aridity, for it turns from the quiet and peaceful blessings which were secretly given to its spirit, to the work that it desires to do with sense; and thus it will lose the one and not obtain the other, since no blessings are now given to it by means of sense as they were formerly. Wherefore in this state the soul must never have meditation imposed upon it, nor must it make any acts, nor strive after sweetness or fervour; for this would be to set an obstacle in the way of the principal agent, who, as I say, is God. For God secretly and quietly<sup>3</sup> infuses into the soul loving knowledge and wisdom without any intervention of specific acts, although sometimes

<sup>1</sup> S: 'abandoned.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz omits: 'and reasonings.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'secretly and in a hidden way.'

He specifically produces them in the soul for some length of time. And the soul has then to walk with loving advertence to God, without making specific acts, but conducting itself, as we have said, passively, and making no efforts of its own, but preserving this simple, pure and<sup>1</sup> loving advertence and determination, like one that opens his eyes with the advertence of love.

34. Since God, then, as giver, is communing with the soul by means of loving and simple knowledge, the soul must likewise commune with Him by receiving with a loving and simple knowledge and advertence, so that knowledge may be united with knowledge and love with love. For it is meet that he who receives should behave in conformity with that which he receives, and not in any other manner, in order to be able to receive and retain it as it is given<sup>2</sup> to him; for, as the philosophers say, anything that is received is in the recipient according to the manner of acting of the recipient. Wherefore it is clear that if the soul at this time were not to abandon its natural procedure of active meditation, it would not receive this blessing in other than a natural way. It would not, in fact, receive it, but would retain its natural act alone, for the supernatural cannot be received in a natural way, nor can it have aught to do with it. And thus, if the soul at this time desires to work on its own account, and to do aught else than remain, quite passively and tranquilly, in that passive and loving advertence whereof we have spoken, making no natural act, save if God should unite it with Himself in some act, it would set a total and effective impediment in the way of the blessings which God is communicating to it supernaturally in loving knowledge. This comes to pass first of all in the exercise of interior purgation wherein, as we have said above, it suffers, and afterwards in sweetness of love. If, as I say, and as in truth is the case, the soul receives this loving knowledge passively and after the supernatural manner of God, and not after the manner of the natural soul, it follows that, in order to receive them, this soul must be quite annihilated in its natural operations, disencumbered, at ease, quiet, peaceful, serene, and adapted to the manner of God; exactly like the air, which receives the greater clarification and heat from the sun when it is pure and cleansed from vapours and at rest. Therefore the soul must be attached to nothing—to no exercise of meditation or reasoning; to no kind of sweetness, whether it be of sense or of spirit; and to no other kind of apprehension.<sup>3</sup> For the spirit needs to be so

<sup>1</sup> S omits: 'simple, pure and.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'as it was given.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'of operation.'

free and so completely annihilated that any kind of thought or meditation or pleasure to which the soul in this state may conceive an attachment would impede and disturb it and would introduce noise into the deep silence which it is meet that the soul should observe, according both to sense and to spirit, so that it may hear the deep and delicate voice in which God speaks to the heart in this secret place,<sup>1</sup> as He said through Osee,<sup>2</sup> in the utmost peace and tranquillity, so that the soul may listen and hear the words of the Lord God to it, as David says,<sup>3</sup> when in this secret place He speaks this peace.

35. When, therefore, it comes to pass that the soul is conscious of being led into silence, and hearkens, it must forget even the practice of that loving advertence of which I have spoken, so that it may remain free for that which the Lord then desires of it; for it must practise that advertence only when it is not conscious of being brought into solitude or interior rest<sup>4</sup> or forgetfulness or attentiveness of the spirit, which, in order that it may be perceived, is always accompanied by a certain peaceful tranquillity and interior absorption.

36. Wherefore, whatever be the time or season, when once the soul has begun to enter into this pure and restful state of contemplation, which comes to pass when it may no longer meditate and is unable to do so, it must not seek to gather to itself meditations, neither must it desire to find help in spiritual sweetness or delight, but it must stand in complete detachment above all this and its spirit must be completely freed from it, as Habacuc<sup>5</sup> said that he must needs do in order to hear what the Lord should say to him. 'I will stand upon my watch,' he says, 'and I will fix my step upon my munition, and I will watch to see that which will be said to me.' This is as though he had said: I will raise up my mind above all the operations and all the knowledge that can be comprehended by my senses, and above that which they can keep and retain within themselves: all this I will leave below. And I will fix the step of the munition of my faculties,<sup>6</sup> not allowing them to advance a step as to their own operation, so that through contemplation I may receive that which is communicated to me from God. For we have already said that pure contemplation consists in receiving.

37. It is not possible that this loftiest wisdom and language of God, such as is contemplation, can be received save in a spirit that is silent and detached from sweetness and discursive knowledge. For this is

<sup>1</sup> S: 'in this important secret place.'

<sup>2</sup> Osee ii, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxxxiv, 9 [A.V., lxxxv, 8].

<sup>4</sup> S: 'into solitude, with all interior rest.'

<sup>5</sup> Habacuc ii, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Bz: 'of the communication of my faculties.' S omits: 'of my faculties.'

that which is said by Isaias, in these words: 'Whom shall He teach knowledge and whom shall He make to hear its voice?'<sup>1</sup> Them that are weaned from the milk—that is, from sweetness and pleasures—and them that are detached from the breasts—that is, from particular apprehensions and knowledge.

38. Oh, spiritual soul, take away the motes and the hairs and the mists,<sup>2</sup> and cleanse thine eye, and the bright sun shall shine upon thee, and thou shalt see clearly.<sup>3</sup> Set the soul in peace, and draw it away and free it from the yoke and slavery of the weak operation of its own capacity, which is the captivity of Egypt, where all is little more than gathering straw to make bricks; and guide it, oh, spiritual director, to the promised land flowing with milk and honey, remembering that it is to give the soul this freedom and holy rest which belongs to His sons that God calls it into the wilderness. There it journeys adorned with festal robes, and with jewels of silver and of gold, having now left Egypt,<sup>4</sup> by which is meant the sensual part of the soul, and emptied it of its riches. And not only so, but the Egyptians<sup>5</sup> are drowned in the sea of contemplation, where the Egyptian of sense finds no support, or foothold, and thus is drowned, and sets free the child of God—that is, the spirit that has gone forth from the limits<sup>6</sup> and the slavery of the operation of the senses (which is to say from its scant understanding, its lowly perception, and its miserable loving and liking) so that God may give it the sweet manna, which, though the sweetness thereof contains within itself all these sweetnesses and delights for which thou desirest to make the soul work, nevertheless, being so delicious that it melts in the mouth, the soul shall not taste of it if it desire to combine it with any other delight or with aught else. Endeavour, then, when the soul is nearing this state, to detach it from all coveting or spiritual sweetness, pleasure, delight and meditation, and disturb it not with care and solicitude of any kind for higher things, still less for lower things, but bring it into the greatest possible degree of solitude and withdrawal. For the more nearly the soul attains all this, and the sooner it reaches this restful tranquillity, the more abundantly does it become infused with the spirit of Divine wisdom, which is the loving, tranquil, lonely, peaceful, sweet inebriator of the spirit. Hereby the soul feels itself to be gently and tenderly wounded and ravished, knowing not

<sup>1</sup> Isaias xxviii, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Bz, C omit: 'and the mists.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P omit: 'and thou shalt see clearly.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg, C, P: 'having now despoiled Egypt.' Bz: 'Christ having now despoiled it' [or 'him'].

<sup>5</sup> S: 'the giants.'

<sup>6</sup> Br, Bz, C: 'the narrow limits.'

by whom, nor whence, nor how. And the reason of this is that the Spirit communicates Himself without any act on the part of the soul.

39. And the smallest part of this that God brings to pass in the soul in holy rest and solitude is an inestimable blessing, greater sometimes than either the soul itself, or he that guides it, can imagine; and, although this may not be very clearly realized at the time, it will in due course become manifest. But the soul has at least been able<sup>1</sup> to attain to a perception of estrangement and withdrawal from all things, sometimes more so than at others, together with an inclination to solitude and a sense of weariness with regard to all worldly creatures and a sweet aspiration of love and life in the spirit. And in this state anything that does not imply such withdrawal is distasteful to it, for, as they say, when a soul tastes of the spirit, it conceives a distaste for the flesh.

40. But the blessings that this silent communication and contemplation leave impressed upon the soul without its perceiving them at the time are, as I say, inestimable; for they are the most secret and therefore the most delicate anointings of the Holy Spirit, which secretly fill the soul with spiritual riches and gifts and graces; for, since it is God Who does all this, He does it not otherwise than as God.

41. These anointings, then, and these touches, are the delicate and sublime acts of the Holy Spirit, which, on account of their delicate and subtle purity, can be understood neither by the soul nor by him that has to do with it, but only by Him Who infuses them, in order to make the soul more pleasing to Himself. These blessings, with the greatest facility, by no more than the slightest act which the soul may desire to make on its own account, with its memory, understanding or will, or by the application of its sense or desire or knowledge or sweetness or pleasure, are disturbed or hindered in the soul, which is a grave evil and a great shame and pity.

42. Oh, how grave a matter is this, and what cause it gives for wonder, that, while the harm done is inconspicuous, and the interference with those holy anointings almost negligible, the harm should be more serious, and a matter for deeper sorrow and regret, than the disquieting and ruining of many souls of a more ordinary nature which have not attained to a state of such supreme fineness and delicacy! It is as though a portrait of supreme and delicate beauty were touched by a clumsy hand, and were daubed with coarse, crude colours. This would be a greater and more crying and pitiful shame than if many more ordinary portraits were besmeared in this way. For

<sup>1</sup> Bg, Bz, C, P add 'now.'

when the work of so delicate a hand as this of the Holy Spirit has been thus roughly treated, who will be able to repair its beauty?

43. Although the gravity and seriousness of this evil cannot be exaggerated, it is so common and frequent that there will hardly be found a single spiritual director who does not inflict it upon souls whom God is beginning to draw nearer to Himself<sup>1</sup> in this kind of contemplation. For, whenever God is anointing the contemplative soul with some most delicate unction of loving knowledge—serene, peaceful, lonely and very far removed from sense and from all that has to do with thought—so that the soul cannot meditate or think of aught soever or find pleasure in aught, whether in higher things or in lower, inasmuch as God is keeping it full of that lonely unction and inclined to rest and solitude,<sup>2</sup> there will come some spiritual director who has no knowledge save of hammering and pounding with the faculties like a blacksmith, and, because his only teaching is of that kind, and he knows of naught save meditation, he will say: 'Come now, leave these periods of inactivity, for you are only living in idleness and wasting your time. Get to work, meditate and make interior acts, for it is right that you should do for yourself that which in you lies, for these other things are the practices of Illuminists and fools.'

44. And thus, since such persons have no understanding of the degrees of prayer or of the ways of the spirit, they cannot see that those acts which they counsel the soul to perform, and those attempts to make it progress along the path of meditation, have been made already, for such a soul as we have been describing has by this time attained to negation and silence of sense and discursive reasoning, and has reached the way of the spirit, which is contemplation,<sup>3</sup> wherein ceases the operation of sense and the soul's own discursive reasoning, and God alone is the agent and it is He that now speaks secretly to the solitary soul, while the soul keeps silence. And if, now that the spirit has achieved spirituality in this way that we are describing, such directors attempt to make the soul continue to walk in sense, it cannot but go backward and become distracted. For if one that has reached his goal begins to set out again for it, he is doing a ridiculous thing, for he can do nothing but walk away from it.<sup>4</sup> When, therefore, through the operation of its faculties, the soul has reached that quiet

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. p. 73, n. 3, above.]

<sup>2</sup> S: 'full of that lonely rest and inclined to solitude.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P: 'the life of the spirit, which is the contemplative life.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: 'but leave it.'

recollection which is the aim of every spiritual person, wherein ceases the operation of these faculties, it would not only be a vain thing for it to begin to make acts with these faculties in order to reach this recollection, but it would be harmful to it, for it would cause it distraction and make it abandon the recollection that it already has.

45. Now these spiritual directors, not understanding, as I say, the nature and properties of the soul's spiritual solitude and recollection, in which solitude God effects these sublime anointings in the soul, superpose or interpose other anointings, which consist in more elementary spiritual exercises,<sup>1</sup> and make the soul work in the way we have described. There is as much difference between this and what the soul previously enjoyed as between any human operation and a Divine operation and between the natural and the supernatural; for in the one case God is working supernaturally in the soul and in the other case the soul alone is working naturally.<sup>2</sup> And the worst result is that, through the exercise of its natural operation, the soul loses its interior recollection and solitude and consequently spoils the wondrous work that God was painting<sup>3</sup> in it. It is thus as if the director were merely striking an anvil; and the soul loses in one respect and gains nothing in the other.

46. Let such guides of the soul as these take heed and remember that the principal agent and guide and mover of souls in this matter is not the director, but the Holy Spirit, Who never loses His care for them; and that they themselves are only instruments to lead souls in the way of perfection by the faith and the law of God, according to the spirit that God is giving to each one. Let them not, therefore, merely aim at guiding these souls according to their own way and the manner suitable to themselves, but let them see if they know the way by which God is leading the soul, and, if they know it not, let them leave the soul in peace and not disturb it. And, in conformity with the way and the spirit by which God is leading these souls, let them ever seek to lead them into greater solitude, tranquillity and liberty of spirit and to give them a certain freedom so that the spiritual and bodily senses may not be bound to any particular thing, either interior or exterior, when God leads the soul by this way of solitude, and let them not worry or grieve, thinking that it is doing nothing; for, though it is

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'which consist in more labour and spiritual exercises.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'and in the other it is only itself working and its operation is no more than natural.' Bz reads similarly, but omits 'only.' C: 'for in the one case God is working and in the other only the soul itself is working and its operation is no more than natural.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'was working.'

not working at that time, God is working in it. Let them strive to disencumber the soul and to set it in a state of rest,<sup>1</sup> in such a way that it will not be bound to any particular kind of knowledge, either above or below, or be fettered by covetousness of any sweetness or pleasure or any other apprehension, but that it will be empty in pure negation with respect to every creature and will be established in poverty of spirit. It is this that the soul must do as far as in it lies, as the Son of God counsels, in these words: 'He that renounceth not all the things that he possesseth cannot be My disciple.'<sup>2</sup> This is to be understood, not only of the renunciation of all temporal things<sup>3</sup> with the will, but also of the surrender of spiritual things, wherein is included poverty of spirit, in which, says the Son of God, consists blessedness.<sup>4</sup> When in this way the soul voids itself of all things and achieves emptiness and surrender of them (which, as we have said, is the part that the soul can play), it is impossible, if the soul does as much as in it lies, that God should fail to perform His own part by communicating Himself to the soul, at least secretly and in silence. It is more impossible than that the sun should fail to shine in a serene and unclouded sky; for as the sun, when it rises in the morning, will enter your house if you open the shutter,<sup>5</sup> even so will God, Who sleeps not in keeping Israel, still less slumbers,<sup>6</sup> enter the soul that is empty and fill it with Divine blessings.

47. God, like the sun, is above our souls and ready to communicate Himself to them. Let those who guide them, then, be content with preparing the soul for this according to evangelical perfection, which is detachment and emptiness of sense and of spirit; and let them not seek to go beyond this in the building up of the soul, for that work belongs only to the Father of lights, from Whom comes down every good and perfect boon.<sup>7</sup> For, if the Lord, as David says, builds not the house, in vain does he labour that builds it.<sup>8</sup> And since God is the supernatural artificer, He will build supernaturally<sup>9</sup> in each soul the building that He desires, if you yourself prepare it and strive to annihilate it with respect to its operations and natural affections, which give it no capacity or strength for the erection of the supernatural building, but at this season disturb rather than help. To prepare the soul

<sup>1</sup> S: 'of solitude and rest.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'of all bodily and temporal things.'

<sup>5</sup> S: 'the window.'

<sup>6</sup> Psalm cxx, 4 [A.V., cxxi, 4]. This is the reading of S. The other MSS. repeat 'sleeps.'

<sup>7</sup> St. James i, 17.

<sup>8</sup> S: 'naturally.'

<sup>2</sup> [St. Luke xiv, 33.]

<sup>4</sup> St. Matthew v, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Psalm cxxvi, 1 [A.V., cxxvii, 1].

thus is your office; and the office of God, as the Wise Man says,<sup>1</sup> is to direct the way of the soul—that is to say, to direct it to supernatural blessings, by ways and in manners which neither you nor the soul can understand. Say not, therefore: ‘Oh, the soul is making no progress, for it is doing nothing!’ For if it is true that it is doing nothing, then, by this very fact that it is doing nothing, I will now prove to you that it is doing a great deal. For, if the understanding is voiding itself of particular kinds of knowledge, both natural and spiritual, it is making progress, and, the more it empties itself of particular knowledge and of the acts of understanding, the greater is the progress of the understanding in its journey to the highest spiritual good.

48. ‘Oh,’ you will say, ‘but it understands nothing distinctly, and so it cannot be making progress.’ My reply to you is that it would rather be making no progress if it were to understand anything distinctly. The reason of this is that God, towards Whom the understanding is journeying, transcends the understanding and is therefore incomprehensible and inaccessible to it; and thus, when it is understanding, it is not approaching God, but is rather withdrawing itself from Him. Therefore the understanding must withdraw from itself, and walk in faith, believing and not understanding. And in this way the understanding will reach perfection, for by faith and by no other means comes union with God; and the soul approaches God more nearly by not understanding than by understanding. Grieve not, therefore, at this, for if the understanding goes not backward (which it would be doing if it desired to occupy itself with distinct knowledge and other kinds of reasoning and understanding, and desired not to be at rest) it is making progress, for it is voiding itself of all that it could apprehend, nothing of which could be God; for, as we have said, God cannot be apprehended by the soul.<sup>2</sup> In this matter of perfection not to go backward is to go forward; it signifies the progress of the understanding, and a gradual increase of faith, and thus it is a progress in darkness, for faith is darkness to the understanding. Wherefore, since the understanding cannot know what God is, it must of necessity walk toward Him in submission and not by understanding;<sup>3</sup> and thus, what you are condemning in your penitent is fitting for his good—namely, that he should not occupy himself with distinct kinds of

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs xvi, 9.

<sup>2</sup> S: ‘by the heart that is occupied.’

<sup>3</sup> S: ‘in submission, and therefore walks not by understanding.’

understanding, since by their means he cannot attain to God, but will rather embarrass himself in journeying to Him.

49. 'Oh,' you will say, 'but if the understanding understands not distinctly the will will be idle and will not love, since the will can only love that which is understood by the understanding; and this must always be avoided on the spiritual road.' There is truth in this, especially as regards the natural acts and operations of the soul, wherein the will loves only that which is distinctly understood by the understanding. But in the contemplation of which we are speaking, wherein God, as we have said, infuses Himself into the soul, there is no necessity for distinct knowledge, nor for the soul to perform any acts of the understanding, for God, in one act, is communicating to the soul light and love together, which is loving and supernatural knowledge, and may be said to be like heat-giving light, which gives out heat, for that light also enkindles the soul in love; and this is confused and obscure to the understanding, since it is knowledge of contemplation, which, as Saint Dionysius says, is a ray of darkness to the understanding. Therefore, as is intelligence in the understanding, so also is love in the will. For, as to the understanding this knowledge infused in it by God is general and dark, without distinction of intelligence, so the will also loves in a general way, without any distinction being made as to any particular thing that is understood. Now as God is Divine light and love, in the communication of Himself which He makes to the soul, He informs these two faculties (understanding and will) equally, with intelligence and love. And as He Himself cannot be understood in this life, the understanding is dark, as I say, and after the same fashion is love in the will; although sometimes in this delicate communication God communicates Himself more to the one faculty than to the other, and acts on the one more than on the other, the soul being at times more conscious of understanding than of love, while at other times it is more conscious of love than of understanding; at times, again, all is understanding, without any love,<sup>1</sup> and at times all is love and there is no understanding. Therefore I say that, as far as concerns the soul's performance of natural<sup>2</sup> acts with the understanding, there can be no love without understanding; but in the acts which God performs and infuses in the soul, as in those of which we are treating, it is different, for God can communicate Himself in the one faculty and not in the other. Thus He can enkindle the will by means of a touch of the heat

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P omit: 'at times, again, all is understanding, without any love.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'interior.'

of His love, although the understanding may have no understanding thereof, just as a person can be warmed by a fire without seeing the fire.

50. In this way the will may oftentimes feel itself to be enkindled or filled with tenderness and love without knowing or understanding anything more distinctly than before, since God is setting love in order in it, even as the Bride says in the Songs, in these words: 'The King made me enter the cellar of wine and set in order charity in me.'<sup>1</sup> There is no reason, therefore, to fear that the will in this state will be idle; for, if of itself it leave performing acts of love concerning particular kinds of knowledge, God performs them within it, inebriating it secretly in infused love, either by means of the knowledge of contemplation, or without such knowledge, as we have just said<sup>2</sup>; and these acts are as much more delectable and meritorious than those made by the soul as the mover and infuser of this love—namely, God—is better than the soul.

51. This love is infused by God in the will when it is empty and detached from other pleasures and particular affections, both higher and lower. The soul, therefore, must see to it that the will is empty and stripped of its affections; for if it is not going backward by desiring to experience some sweetness or pleasure, it is going forward, even though it have no particular perception of this in God, and it is soaring upward to God above all things, since it takes no pleasure in anything. It is going toward God, although it may be taking no particular and distinct delight in Him, nor may be loving Him with any distinct act, for it is taking greater pleasure in Him secretly, by means of that dark and general infusion of love, than it does in all things that are distinct, for it sees clearly in this state that nothing gives it so much pleasure as that solitary quiet. And it is loving Him above all things that can be loved, since it has flung from itself all other kinds of sweetness and pleasure which have become distasteful to it. And there is thus no reason to be troubled, for, if the will can find no sweetness and pleasure in particular acts, it is going forward; seeing that to refrain from going backward and from embracing anything that belongs to sense is to go forward towards the inaccessible, which is God, and thus there is no wonder that the soul has no perception thereof. Wherefore, in order to journey to God, the will has rather to be continually detaching

<sup>1</sup> Canticles ii, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'infused love, or by means of the knowledge of simple contemplation, as we have just said.'

itself from everything delectable and pleasant than to be conceiving an attachment to it. In this way it completely fulfils the precept of love, which is to love God above all things; and this cannot be unless it have detachment and emptiness<sup>1</sup> with regard to them all.

52. Neither is there any cause for misgivings when the memory is voided of its forms and figures, for, since God has no form or figure, the memory is safe if it be voided of form or figure, and it is approaching God the more nearly; for, the more it leans upon the imagination, the farther it is going from God, and the greater is the peril wherein it walks, since God is incomprehensible and therefore cannot be contained in the imagination.

53. These spiritual directors such as we have been describing fail to understand souls that are now walking in this solitary and quiet contemplation, because they themselves have not arrived so far, nor learned what it means to leave behind the discursive reasoning of meditations, as I have said, and they think that these souls are idle. And therefore they disturb and impede the peace of this quiet and hushed contemplation which God has been giving their penitents by His own power, and they cause them to follow the road of meditation and imaginative reasoning and make them perform interior acts, wherein the aforementioned souls find great repugnance, aridity and distraction, since they would fain remain in their holy rest and their quiet and peaceful state of recollection. But, as sense can perceive in this neither pleasure nor help nor activity, their directors persuade them to strive after sweetness and fervour, though they ought rather to advise them the contrary. The penitents, however, are unable to do as they did previously, and can enter into none of these things, for the time for them has now passed and they belong no more to their proper path; and so they are doubly disturbed and believe that they are going to perdition; and their directors encourage them in this belief and parch their spirits, and take from them the precious unctions wherewith God was anointing them in solitude and tranquillity. This, as I have said, is a great evil; their directors are plunging them into mire and mourning; for they are losing one thing and labouring without profit at the other.

54. Such persons have no knowledge of what is spirituality. They offer a great insult and great irreverence to God, by laying their coarse hands where God is working. For it has cost Him dearly to bring these souls to this place and He greatly esteems having brought them to this solitude and emptiness of their faculties and operations,

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'and spiritual emptiness.'

that He may speak to their hearts, which is what He ever desires. He has Himself taken them by the hand, and He Himself reigns in their souls in abundant peace and quietness, causing the natural acts of their faculties to fail wherewith they toiled all night and wrought nothing. And He has brought peace to their spirits without the work and operations of sense, for neither sense nor any act thereof is capable of receiving spirit.

55. How precious in His sight is this tranquillity and slumbering or withdrawal<sup>1</sup> of sense can be clearly seen in that adjuration,<sup>2</sup> so notable and effective, that He utters in the Songs, where He says: 'I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the goats and harts of the fields, that ye awaken not my beloved nor cause her to wake until she please.'<sup>3</sup> Herein, by introducing these solitary and retiring animals, He gives us to understand how much He loves that solitary<sup>4</sup> forgetfulness and slumber. But these spiritual directors will not let the soul have repose or quiet, but demand that it shall continually labour and work, that it may leave no room for God to work, and that that which He is working may be undone and wiped out through the operation of the soul. They have become as the little foxes which tear down the flowering vine<sup>5</sup> of the soul<sup>6</sup>; for which reason the Lord complains through Isaias, saying: 'You have devoured My vineyard.'<sup>7</sup>

56. But, it may possibly be said, these directors err with good intent, through insufficiency of knowledge. This, however, does not excuse them for the advice which they are rash enough to give without first learning to understand either the way that the soul is taking or its spirit. Not understanding this, they are laying their coarse hands upon things that they understand not, instead of leaving them for those who are able to understand them; for it is a thing of no small weight, and no slight crime, to cause the soul to lose inestimable blessings and sometimes to leave it completely confused<sup>8</sup> by rash counsel. And thus one who rashly errs, being under an obligation to give reliable advice—as is every man, whatever his office—shall not go unpunished, by reason of the harm that he has done. For the business of God has to be undertaken with great circumspection, and with eyes wide open, most of all in a case<sup>9</sup> of such great importance and a

<sup>1</sup> Bg, Bz, P: 'annihilation.'

<sup>2</sup> Canticles iii, 5.

<sup>3</sup> S: 'the flower of the vine.'

<sup>4</sup> Isaias iii, 14.

<sup>5</sup> [The original has a stronger word: 'vitiated,' 'corrupted.' Cf. the energetic metaphor used in the first redaction (p. 79, n. 6, above).]

<sup>6</sup> S: 'in things.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'comparison.' P: 'conjunction.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'voluntary.'

<sup>6</sup> [Canticles ii, 15.]

business so sublime as is the business of these souls, where a man may bring them almost infinite gain if the advice he gives be good and almost infinite loss if it be mistaken.

57. But if you will still maintain that you have some excuse, though for myself I can see none, you will at least be unable to say that there is any excuse for one who, in his treatment of a soul, never allows it to go out of his jurisdiction, for certain vain reasons and intentions which he best knows. Such a person will not go unpunished, for it is certain that, if that soul<sup>1</sup> is to make progress by going forward on the spiritual road, wherein God is ever aiding it, it will have to change the style and method of its prayer, and it will of necessity require instruction of a higher kind and a deeper spirituality than that of such a director. For not all directors have sufficient knowledge to meet all the possibilities and cases which they encounter on the spiritual road, neither is their spirituality so perfect that they know how a soul has to be led and guided and directed in every state of the spiritual life; at least no man should think that he knows everything<sup>2</sup> concerning this, or that God will cease leading a given soul farther onward. Not everyone who can hew a block of wood is able to carve an image; nor is everyone who can carve it able to smooth<sup>3</sup> and polish it; nor is everyone that can polish it able to paint it; nor can everyone that is able to paint it complete it with the final touches. Each one of these, in working upon an image, can do no more than that with which he himself is familiar, and, if he tries to do more, he will only ruin his work.

58. How then, we may ask, if you are only a hewer of wood, which signifies that you can make a soul despise the world and mortify its desires;<sup>4</sup> or, if at best you are a carver, which means that you can lead a soul to holy meditations but can do no more: how, in such a case, will this soul attain to the final perfection of a delicate painting, the art of which consists neither in the hewing of the wood, nor in the carving of it, nor even in the outlining of it, but in the work which God Himself must do in it? It is certain, then, that if your instruction is always of one kind, and you cause the soul to be continually bound to you, it will either go backward, or, at the least, will not go forward. For what, I ask you, will the image be like, if you never do any work upon it save hewing and hammering, which in the language of the soul is exercising the faculties? When will this image be finished? When

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'if the soul that has come hither.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'that he lacks nothing.'

<sup>3</sup> C, S: 'to perfect.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'appetites.'] Bg, P: 'its passions and appetites.'

or how will it be left for God to paint it? Is it possible that you yourself can perform all these offices, and consider yourself so consummate a master that this soul shall never need any other?

59. And supposing that you have sufficient experience to direct some one soul, which perchance may have no ability to advance beyond your teaching, it is surely impossible for you to have sufficient experience for the direction of all those whom you refuse to allow to go out of your hands; for God leads each soul along a different road and there shall hardly be found a single spirit who can walk even half the way which is suitable for another. Who can be like Saint Paul and have the skill to make himself all things to all men, that he may gain them all? You yourself tyrannize over souls, and take away their liberty, and arrogate to yourself the breadth of evangelical doctrine, so that you not only strive that they may not leave you, but, what is worse, if any one of them should at some time have gone to discuss, with another director, some matter which he could not suitably discuss with you, or if God should lead him in order to teach him something which you have not taught him, you behave to him (I say it not without shame) like a husband who is jealous of his wife; nor is your jealousy even due to desire for the honour of God, or for the profit of that soul (for you must not presume to suppose that in neglecting you in this way he was neglecting God): it is due only to your own pride and presumption, or to some other imperfect motive relating to yourself.

60. Great is the indignation of God with such directors, whom He promises punishment when He speaks through Ezechiel and says: 'Ye drank of the milk of My flock and clothed yourselves with their wool and ye fed not My flock. I will require My flock at your hand.'<sup>1</sup>

61. Spiritual directors, then, ought to give these souls freedom, for, when they would seek to better themselves, their directors have an obligation to put a good face upon it,<sup>2</sup> since they know not by what means God desires such a soul to make progress, especially when the penitent dislikes the instruction that he is receiving, which is a sign that it is of no profit to him, either because God is leading him on farther, or by another way than that by which his director has been leading him, or because the director himself has changed his way of dealing with his penitents. The director, in such a case, should himself

<sup>1</sup> Ezechiel xxxiv, 2, 3, 10.

<sup>2</sup> C: 'when, in order to better themselves, they seek another director, their director has an obligation to put a good face upon it.'

advise a change, since any other advice springs from foolish pride and presumption or from some other pretension.

62. Let us now leave this question and speak of another more pestilential habit of such directors as these, which also belongs to others worse than they. For it may come to pass that God will be anointing certain souls with the unctions of holy desires and impulses to leave the world, to change their life and condition, to serve Him and despise the world (it is a great thing in His eyes that He should have succeeded in bringing them thus far, for the things of the world are not according to the will of God), and these directors, using human arguments or putting forward considerations quite contrary to the doctrine of Christ and His way of humility and despising of all things, place obstacles in their path or advise them to delay their decision, from motives of their own interest or pleasure, or because they fear where no fear is; or, what is still worse, they sometimes labour to remove these desires from their penitents' hearts. Such directors show an undevout spirit; and are clad, as it were, in very worldly garb, having little of the tenderness of Christ, since they neither enter themselves by the narrow gate of life, nor allow others to enter. These persons our Saviour threatens,<sup>1</sup> through Saint Luke, saying: 'Woe unto you that have taken away the key of knowledge, and enter not in yourselves nor allow others to enter.'<sup>2</sup> For these persons in truth are placed as barriers and obstacles at the gate of Heaven; they hinder from entering those that ask counsel of them, yet they are aware that God has commanded them, not only to allow and help them to enter, but even to compel them to enter. For God says, through Saint Luke: 'Insist, make them come in, that My house may be filled with guests.'<sup>3</sup> They, on the other hand, are compelling souls not to enter; such are blind guides who can obstruct the life<sup>4</sup> of the soul, which is the Holy Spirit. This comes to pass with spiritual directors in many more ways than have been mentioned here; some do it knowingly, others unconsciously; but neither class shall remain unpunished, since, having assumed their office, they are under an obligation to know and consider what they do.

63. The second blind guide of whom we have spoken, who can hinder the soul in this kind<sup>5</sup> of recollection, is the devil, who, being himself blind, desires the soul to be blind also. When the soul is in these lofty and solitary places wherein are infused the delicate unctions

<sup>1</sup> Bg: 'admonishes.'

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xi, 52.

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke xiv, 23.

<sup>4</sup> Thus P, S. The other authorities read: 'the way.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz: 'this business.'

of the Holy Spirit (at which he has heavy grief and envy, for he sees that not only is the soul gaining great riches, but is flying beyond him and he can in no wise lay hold on it), inasmuch as the soul is alone, detached and withdrawn from every creature and every trace thereof, the devil tries to cover this withdrawal, as it were, with cataracts of knowledge and mists<sup>1</sup> of sensible sweetness, which are sometimes good, so that he may entice the soul more surely, and thus cause it to return<sup>2</sup> to a different way of life and to the operation of sense, and to look at these delights and this good knowledge which he sets before it, and embrace them, so that it may continue its journey to God in reliance upon them. And herein he very easily distracts it and withdraws it from that solitude and recollection, wherein, as we have said, the Holy Spirit is working those great and secret things. As the soul is of itself inclined to sensible enjoyment, especially if these are the things which it is really desiring and understands not the road that it is taking, it is very easily led to cling to those kinds of knowledge and delights which the devil<sup>3</sup> is giving it, and withdraws itself from the solitude wherein God had placed it. For, it says, as it was doing nothing in that solitude and quiet of the faculties, this other state seems better, for now it is certainly doing something. It is a great pity that it cannot<sup>4</sup> realize how, for the sake of one mouthful—of some one delight or some particular kind of knowledge<sup>5</sup>—it is preventing itself from feeding wholly upon God Himself. This God effects in that solitude wherein He places the soul, for He absorbs it in Himself through these solitary and spiritual unctions.

64. In this way, with hardly any trouble, the devil works the gravest injuries, causing the soul to lose great riches, and dragging it forth like a fish, with the tiniest bait, from the depths of the pure waters of the spirit, where it had no support or foothold, but was engulfed and immersed in God. And hereupon he drags it to the bank, giving it help and support, and showing it something whereon it may lean, so that it may walk upon its own feet with great labour instead of floating in the waters of Siloe, that go with silence, bathed in the unctions of God. And to this the devil attaches such importance that it is a matter for great marvel; and, since a slight injury is more serious to a soul in this condition than is a serious injury to many other souls, as we have said,

<sup>1</sup> C: 'and particles.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'to turn back.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'the horned devil' [the adjective is depreciatory].

<sup>4</sup> Bz: 'that it thinks it was doing nothing and cannot.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg: 'of one mouthful and a particular delight.' P: 'of one mouthful of no such particular delight.'

there is hardly any soul walking on this road which does not meet with great injuries and suffer great losses. For the evil one takes his stand, with great cunning, on the road which leads from sense to spirit,<sup>1</sup> deceiving and luring the soul by means of sense, and giving it sensual things, as we have said.<sup>2</sup> And the soul thinks not that anything is being lost thereby, and therefore fails to enter into the innermost chamber of the Spouse, but stands at the door to see what is happening outside in the sensual part. The devil, as Job says, beholdeth every high thing<sup>3</sup>—that is to say, the spiritual high places of souls—that he may assault them. Therefore if perchance any soul enters into high recollection, since he cannot distract it in the way we have described, he labours so that he may at least be able to make it advert to sense<sup>4</sup> by means of horrors, fears or pains of the body, or by outward sounds<sup>5</sup> and noises, in order to bring it out and distract it from the interior spirit, until he can do no more and so leaves it. But with such ease does he corrupt these precious souls and squander their great riches, that, although he thinks this of greater importance than to bring about a heavy fall in many others, he esteems it not highly because of the facility with which it is done and the little effort that it costs him. In this sense we may understand that which God said to Job concerning the devil, namely: 'He shall drink up a river and shall not marvel, and he trusteth that the Jordan may run into his mouth—by the Jordan being understood the summit of perfection. In his eyes, as with a hook, shall he take him, and with stakes shall he bore his nostrils.'<sup>6</sup> That is, with the darts of the knowledge wherewith he is piercing the soul, he will disperse its spirituality; for the breath which goes out through his nostrils, when they are pierced, is dispersed in many directions. And later he says: 'The beams of the sun shall be under him and they shall scatter gold under him as mire.'<sup>7</sup> For he causes souls that have been enlightened to lose the marvellous rays of Divine knowledge, and from souls that are rich he takes away and scatters the precious gold of Divine adornment.

65. Oh, souls! Since God is showing you such sovereign mercies as to lead you through this state of solitude and recollection, withdrawing you from your labours of sense, return not to sense again.

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P add: 'as is his invariable custom, so that the soul may not pass from sense to spirit.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg follows the first redaction [p. 83, above] in this sentence.

<sup>3</sup> Job xli, 25.

<sup>4</sup> Bz, C: 'to cause it to be diverted to sense.'

<sup>5</sup> Thus Bg, P. The other MSS. [and P. Silverio] read 'senses.'

<sup>6</sup> Job xl, 18-19 [A.V., xl, 23-4].

<sup>7</sup> Job xli, 21 [A.V., xli, 30].

Lay aside your operations, for, though once, when you were beginners, they helped you to deny the world and yourselves, they will now be a great obstacle and hindrance to you, since God is granting you the grace of Himself working within you. If you are careful to set your faculties upon naught soever, withdrawing them from everything and in no way hindering them, which is the proper part for you to play in this state alone, and if you wait upon God with loving and pure attentiveness, as I said above, in the way which I there described (working no violence to the soul,<sup>1</sup> save to detach it from everything and set it free, lest you disturb and spoil its peace and tranquillity), God will feed your soul for you with heavenly food, since you are not hindering Him.

66. The third blind guide of the soul is the soul itself, which, not understanding itself, as we have said, becomes perturbed and does itself harm. For it knows not how to work save by means of sense and reasoning with the mind, and thus, when God is pleased to bring it into that emptiness and solitude where it can neither use its faculties nor make any acts, it sees that it is doing nothing, and strives to do something: in this way it becomes distracted and full of aridity and displeasure, whereas formerly it was rejoicing in the rest of the spiritual silence and peace wherein God was secretly exercising it.<sup>2</sup> And it may come to pass that God persists in keeping the soul in that silent tranquillity, while the soul also persists with its imagination and its understanding in trying to work by itself. In this it is like a child, whom its mother tries to carry in her arms, while it strikes out with its feet and cries out to be allowed to walk, and thus neither makes any progress nor allows its mother to do so. Or it is as when a painter is trying to paint a portrait and his subject keeps moving: either he will be unable to do anything at all or the picture will be spoiled.

67. The soul in this state of quiet must bear in mind that, although it may not be conscious of making any progress or of doing anything, it is making much more progress than if it were walking on its feet; for God is bearing it in His arms, and thus, although it is making progress at the rate willed by God Himself, it is not conscious of such movement. And although it is not working with its own faculties, it is nevertheless accomplishing much more than if it were doing so, since

<sup>1</sup> The MSS. show considerable divergences here, adding, as in the first redaction [p. 84, above], 'which must be when you have no desire to be attentive' (Bz). C, P omit 'no.' S [followed by P. Silverio]: 'which must be when you are not unwilling to not be attentive.' Bg reads similarly, but omits the second 'not,' thus reversing the sense.

<sup>2</sup> Bg, G: 'was secretly giving it joy' [*a gusto for a gestio*].

God is working within it. And it is not remarkable that the soul should be unable to see this, for sense cannot perceive that which God works in the soul at this time, since it is done in silence; for, as the Wise Man says, the words of wisdom are heard in silence. Let the soul leave itself in the hands of God and entrust itself neither to its own hands nor to those of these two blind guides<sup>1</sup>; for, if it remains thus and occupies not its faculties in anything, it will make sure progress.

68. Now let us return to the matter of these deep caverns of the faculties of the soul wherein we said that the suffering of the soul is wont to be great when God is anointing and preparing it with the most sublime<sup>2</sup> unctions of the Holy Spirit in order that He may unite it with Himself. These unctions are so subtle and so delicate in their anointing that they penetrate the inmost<sup>3</sup> substance of the depth<sup>4</sup> of the soul, preparing it and filling it with sweetness in such a way that its suffering and fainting with desire in the boundless emptiness of these caverns is likewise boundless. Here we must note this: if the unctions that were preparing these caverns of the soul for the union of the spiritual marriage with God are as sublime as we have said, what do we suppose will be the possession of intelligence, love and glory which understanding, will and memory attain in the said union with God? It is certain that, even as was the thirst and hunger which characterized these caverns, so now will be the satisfaction and fullness and delight thereof; and, as was the delicacy of the preparations, even so will be the wonder of the possession of the soul and the fruition of its sense.

69. By the sense of the soul is here understood the virtue and vigour that belong to the substance of the soul that it may perceive and have fruition of the objects of the spiritual faculties by means of which it tastes the wisdom and love and communication of God. Hence in this line the soul calls these three faculties—memory, understanding and will—the deep caverns of sense; for by means of them and in them the soul has a deep perception and experience of the grandeurs of the wisdom and the excellences of God. Wherefore it is with great propriety that the soul here calls them deep caverns, for, as it perceives that they are able to contain the deep intelligences and splendours of the lamps of fire, it realizes that they have capacity and depth as great as are the various things which they receive from the intelligences, the sweetnesses, the fruitions, the delights, and so forth, that come

<sup>1</sup> Gg: 'of the two other.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz, S: 'final.' P: 'infinite.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'most subtle.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz: 'of the sense.'

from God. All these things are received and established in this sense of the soul, which, as I say, is the soul's virtue and capacity for perceiving, possessing and having pleasure in everything, and the caverns of the faculties minister this to it, even as to the ordinary sense of the fancy there flock the bodily senses, with the forms of their objects, and this sense is the receptacle and storehouse for them. This common sense of the soul, therefore, which has become a receptacle and store-house for the grandeurs of God, is enlightened and made rich to the extent that it attains this lofty and glorious possession.

### Which were dark and blind

70. That is to say, before God enlightened them and made them glorious. For the understanding of this it must be known that there are two reasons for which the sense of sight may be unable to see: either it may be in darkness or it may be blind. God is the light and the object of the soul; when this light illumines it not, it is in darkness, even though its power of vision may be most excellent. When it is in sin, or when it employs its desires upon aught else, it is then blind; and even though the light of God may then shine upon it, yet, because it is blind, the light cannot be seen by the darkness of the soul, which is the ignorance of the soul. Before God enlightened it through this transformation, the soul was blind and ignorant concerning many good things of God, even as the Wise Man says that he was blind before Wisdom illumined him,<sup>1</sup> using these words: 'He illumined my ignorance.'<sup>2</sup>

71. Speaking spiritually, it is one thing to be in darkness and another to be in thick darkness; for to be in thick darkness is to be blind (as we have said) in sin; but to be in darkness only is something that may happen when one is not in sin. This may be in two ways: in the natural sense, when the soul has no light from certain<sup>3</sup> natural things; and in the supernatural sense, when it has no light from certain<sup>4</sup> supernatural things; and with regard to both these things the soul here says that its sense was dark before this precious union.<sup>5</sup> For until the Lord said: *Fiat lux*, thick darkness was upon the face of the abyss of the cavern of sense of the soul; and the deeper is this abyss and the more profound are its caverns, the more abysmal and profound are the caverns and the more profound is the thick darkness that is upon it with respect to the

<sup>1</sup> Bz: 'before [He] enlightened and illumined him.'

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiasticus li, 26.

<sup>4</sup> Bg, C, P omit 'certain.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P omit 'certain.'

<sup>5</sup> C, S: 'precious unction.'

supernatural, when God, Who is its light, enlightens it not. And thus it is impossible for the soul to raise its eyes to the Divine light, or even to think of such light, for it knows not of what manner is this light, since it has never seen it; wherefore it cannot desire it, but will rather desire thick darkness, knowing what this is like; and it will go from one darkness to another, guided by that darkness, for darkness cannot lead to anything save to fresh darkness. Then, as David says: 'Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.'<sup>1</sup> And thus one abyss calls to another abyss; namely, an abyss of light calls to another abyss of light, and an abyss of thick darkness to another abyss of thick darkness; each like calls to its like and communicates itself to it. And thus the light of the grace that God had already given to this soul, wherewith He had enlightened the eye of the abyss of its spirit, opened it to the Divine light, and so made it pleasing to Himself, has called to another abyss of grace, which is this Divine transformation of the soul in God, whereby the eye of sense is so greatly enlightened and made pleasing to God that we may say that the light of God and that of the soul are both one, the natural light of the soul is united to the supernatural light of God and the supernatural light alone shines; even as the light created by God was united with that of the sun and the light of the sun alone now shines without the other failing.

72. And the soul was also blind inasmuch as it took pleasure in other things than God; for the blindness of the higher and rational sense is that desire which, like a cataract and a cloud, overlays and covers the eye of reason, so that the soul shall not see the things that are in front of it. And thus, for as long as the soul took any pleasure in sense, it was blind and could not see the great riches and Divine beauty<sup>2</sup> that were behind the cataract. For just as, if a man sets anything before his eyes, however small, this suffices to obstruct his sight so that he cannot see other things that are in front of him, however large they be, just so any small desire or idle act in the soul suffices to obstruct its vision of all these great and Divine things, which come after the pleasures and desires for which the soul longs.

73. Oh, that one might describe here how impossible it is for the soul that has other desires to judge of the things of God as they are! For, in order to judge the things of God,<sup>3</sup> the soul must cast out wholly from itself its own desire and pleasure and must not judge them

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xviii, 2 [A.V., xix, 2].

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'the Divine riches and grandeurs.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz abbreviates: 'to obstruct its vision of all these great things of God as they are. For, in order to judge the things of God aright.'

together with Him; else it will infallibly come to consider the things of God as though they were not of God and those that are not of God as though they were of God. For, when that cataract and cloud of desire covers the eye of judgment, the soul sees nothing but the cataract—sometimes of one colour, sometimes of another, just as it may happen to be; and the soul thinks that the cataract is God, for, as I say, it can see nothing beyond the cataract, which covers the senses, and God cannot be apprehended by the senses. And in this way desire and the pleasures of the senses hinder the soul from a knowledge of lofty things. This the Wise Man well expresses, in these words, saying: ‘The deceit of vanity<sup>1</sup> obscureth good things, and the inconstancy of concupiscence transformeth the sense devoid of malice’—that is to say, good judgment.<sup>2</sup>

74. Wherefore those persons who are not spiritual enough to be purged of their desires and pleasures, but still to some extent follow their animal nature with respect to these, may think much of the things that are viler and baser to the spirit, which are those that come nearest to the sensual condition according to which they still live, and they will consider them to be of great importance; while those things that are loftier and more greatly prized by the spirit, which are those that are farthest withdrawn from sense, they will count of small importance and will not esteem them, and sometimes will even consider them to be folly, as Saint Paul well expresses it in these words: ‘The animal man perceiveth not the things of God; they are to him as foolishness and he cannot understand them.’<sup>3</sup> By the animal man is here understood the man that still lives according to natural desires and pleasures. For, although certain pleasures of sense may be born in the spirit, yet, if a man desires to cling to them with his natural desire, they are no more than natural desires; it is of small importance that the motive or object of this desire should be supernatural if the desire proceeds from nature<sup>4</sup> and has its root and strength in nature; it does not cease to be a natural desire, for it has the same substance and nature as if it related to a natural matter and motive.

75. But you will say to me: ‘It must follow, then, that, when the soul desires God, it desires Him not supernaturally and therefore its desire will not be meritorious in the sight of God.’ I reply that it is true that that desire of the soul for God is not always supernatural, but only

<sup>1</sup> C: ‘of the will.’

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom iv, 12.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians ii, 14. S: ‘and it is very difficult for him to understand them.’

<sup>4</sup> Bg, P: ‘from a natural motive.’

when God infuses it, and Himself gives it its strength, and then it is a very different thing from natural desire, and, until God infuses it, it has little or no merit. When you, of your own accord, would fain desire God, this is no more than a natural desire; nor will it be anything more until God be pleased to inform it supernaturally. And thus when you, of your own accord, would fain attach your desire to spiritual things<sup>1</sup>, and when you would lay hold upon the pleasure of them, you exercise your own natural desire, and are spreading a cataract over your eye, and are an animal being.<sup>2</sup> And you cannot therefore understand or judge of that which is spiritual, which is higher than any natural desire and sense. And if you are still doubtful, I know not what to say to you save to bid you read these words again, and then perhaps you will understand them, for what I have said is the substance of the truth, and I cannot possibly enlarge upon it here any further.

76. This sense of the soul, then, which before was dark, without this Divine light of God, and was blind, because of its desires and affections, is now not only enlightened and bright in its deep caverns<sup>3</sup> through this Divine union<sup>4</sup> with God, but has even become as it were resplendent light in the caverns, which are its faculties.<sup>5</sup>

**With strange brightness Give heat and light together to their Beloved!**

77. For, now that these caverns of the faculties are so wonderful, and so marvellously<sup>6</sup> infused with the wondrous splendours of those lamps, which, as we have said, are burning within them, they are sending back to God in God, over and above the surrender of themselves which they are making to God, since they are illumined and enkindled in God, those same splendours which the soul has received with loving glory; they turn to God in God, and become themselves lamps enkindled in the splendours of the Divine lamps, giving to the Beloved the same light and heat of love that they receive;<sup>7</sup> for in this state, after the same manner as they receive, they are giving to Him that receives and has given with the very brightness that He gives to them; even as glass, when the sun strikes it, sends out splendours likewise;

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'attach your desire to spiritual things and taste them.'

<sup>2</sup> S: 'and you do not cease to be an animal being.'

<sup>3</sup> C adds: 'of sense.'

<sup>4</sup> S: 'through this most high and Divine union.'

<sup>5</sup> Bg, P add: 'so much so, that they.'

<sup>6</sup> Bg, P: 'so wonderfully and marvellously.' Bz has 'greatly mortified' for 'wonderful.'

<sup>7</sup> Bg, P add: 'from Him.'

although the former is after a nobler manner, because the exercise of the will intervenes.

78. 'With strange brightness' signifies that the brightness is strange in a way that is far remote from all common thought and all description and every way and manner. For the brightness with which God visits the soul is like to the brightness wherewith the understanding receives Divine wisdom and is made one with the understanding of God; for one cannot give save in the way wherein is given to him. And like to the brightness wherewith the will is united in goodness<sup>1</sup> is the brightness wherewith the soul gives to God in God the same goodness; for the soul receives it only to give it again. In the same way, according to the brightness wherewith the soul has knowledge of the greatness of God, being united therewith, it shines and gives heat of love. According to the brightness of the other Divine attributes which are here communicated to the soul—fortitude, beauty, justice, etc.—are the manners of brightness wherewith the sense, having fruition, is giving to its Beloved, in its Beloved—that is to say, giving that same light and heat that it is receiving from its Beloved; for, since in this state it has been made one and the same thing with Him, it is after a certain manner God by participation; for, although this is not so as perfectly as in the next life, the soul is, as we have said, as it were a shadow of God. And in this way, since the soul, by means of this substantial transformation, is the shadow of God, it does in God and through God that which He does through Himself in the soul, in the same way as He does it; for the will of these two is one and thus the operation of God and that of the soul are one. Therefore, even as God is giving Himself to the soul with free and gracious will, even so likewise the soul, having a will that is the freer and the more generous in proportion as it has a greater degree of union with God, is giving God in God to God Himself, and thus the gift of the soul to God is true and entire. For in this state the soul sees that God truly belongs to it, and that it possesses Him with hereditary possession, with rightful ownership,<sup>2</sup> as an adopted child of God, through the grace that God gave to it, and it sees that, since He belongs to it, it may give and communicate Him to whomsoever it desires of its own will; and thus it gives Him to its Beloved, Who is the very God that gave Himself to it. And herein the soul pays God all that it owes Him; inasmuch as, of its own will, it gives as much as it has received of Him.

<sup>1</sup> C: 'united with the Divine will'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'with rightful ownership and possession.'

79. And since, in making this gift to God, it gives it to the Holy Spirit, with voluntary surrender, as that which is His own, that He may be loved therein as He deserves, the soul has<sup>1</sup> inestimable delight and fruition, for it sees that it is giving to God that which is His own and which becomes Him according to His infinite Being. For, although it is true that the soul cannot give God Himself to Himself anew, since He in Himself is ever Himself, yet, in so far as the soul is itself concerned, it gives perfectly and truly, giving all that He had given to it, to pay the debt of love.<sup>2</sup> And this is to give as has been given to it, and God is repaid by that gift of the soul—yet with less than this He cannot be paid. And this He takes with gratitude, as something belonging to the soul that it gives to Him, and in that same gift He also loves the soul, as it were, anew,<sup>3</sup> and so at this time there is formed between God and the soul a reciprocal love in the agreement of the union and surrender of marriage, wherein the possessions of both, which are the Divine Being, are possessed by each one freely, by reason of the voluntary surrender of the one to the other, and are possessed likewise by both together, wherein each says to the other that which the Son of God said to the Father in Saint John, namely: *Omnia mea tua sunt, et tua mea sunt et clarificatus sum in eis.*<sup>4</sup> That is: All My possessions are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them. In the next life this happens without any intermission in the perfect fruition thereof. But in this state of union this comes to pass when God brings about<sup>5</sup> this act of transformation in the soul, although not with the same perfection as in the life to come. And it is evident that the soul can make that gift,<sup>6</sup> although it is greater than its capacity and its being; for it is evident that one who possesses many peoples and kingdoms as his own, which are much greater in importance,<sup>7</sup> can give them to whom he desires.

80. This is the great satisfaction and contentment of the soul, to see that it is giving to God more than it is in itself and is in itself worth,<sup>8</sup> with that same Divine light<sup>9</sup> and Divine warmth which He gives to it;

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'has as it were.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to pay the love.'] C, S: 'to gain the love.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg: 'that it gives to Him, and in that surrender of God the soul also loves as it were anew, and He gives Himself freely to the soul anew and therein loves the soul.'

<sup>4</sup> St. John xvii, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Bg: 'when God excites.'

<sup>6</sup> Bg, P: 'that so great gift.' [This text has *et*, not *al*, like that of the first redaction. Cf. p. 91, n. 8, above.]

<sup>7</sup> Bg adds: 'than himself.'

<sup>8</sup> Bg adds: 'giving God to Himself with such great liberality, as that which is its own.'

<sup>9</sup> C: 'Divine light and brightness.'

this<sup>1</sup> comes to pass in the next life through the light of glory, and, in this life, through most enlightened faith. In this way, the deep caverns of sense, with strange brightness, give heat and light together to their Beloved. The soul says 'together,' because the communication of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in the soul are made together, and are the light and fire of love in it.

81. But here we must make a brief observation on the brightness wherewith the soul makes this surrender. Concerning this it must be noted that, as the soul enjoys a certain image of fruition caused by the union of the understanding and the affection with God, being delighted and constrained by this great favour, it makes the surrender, of God and of itself, to God, in wondrous manners. For, with respect to love, the soul presents itself to God with strange brightness; and equally so with respect to this shadow of fruition; and likewise with respect to praise, and, in the same way, with respect to gratitude.

82. With regard to the first of these, the soul has three principal kinds of love which may be called brightnesses. The first is that the soul now loves God, not through itself, but through Himself; which is a wondrous brightness, since it loves through the Holy Spirit, even as the Father and the Son love One Another, as the Son Himself says, in Saint John: 'May the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me be in them and I in them.'<sup>2</sup> The second kind of brightness is to love God in God; for in this vehement union the soul is absorbed in the love of God and God surrenders Himself to the soul with great vehemence. The third kind of love which is brightness is that the soul here loves Him for Who He is; it loves Him not only because He is bountiful, good, glorious,<sup>3</sup> and so forth, with respect to itself, but much more earnestly, because He is all this in Himself essentially.

83. And with regard to this image of fruition there are also three other principal kinds of brightness, no less wonderful.<sup>4</sup> The first is that the soul in this state has fruition of God through God Himself, for, as the soul in this state unites understanding with omnipotence, wisdom, goodness, and so forth, albeit not so clearly as it will do in the next life, it delights greatly in all these things, understood distinctly, as we have said above. The second principal brightness belonging to this delight is that the soul delights itself duly in God alone, without any intermingling of creatures. The third delight is that it enjoys Him for Who He is alone, without any intermingling of its own pleasure.

<sup>1</sup> S: 'Divine warmth and solitude; this, etc.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, C, P: 'good, glory.'

<sup>2</sup> St. John xvii, 26.

<sup>4</sup> S adds: 'and precious.'

84. With respect to the praise which the soul offers to God in this union, there are three kinds of brightness here also. First, the soul praises God as a duty, for it sees that He created it to offer Him praise, as He says through *Isaias*: 'I have formed this people for Myself; it shall sing My praises.'<sup>1</sup> The second kind of brightness of this praise comes from the blessings which the soul receives and the delight that it has in offering Him praise. The third is that it praises God for that which He is in Himself; even if to do so caused the soul no delight at all, it would still praise Him for Who He is.

85. With respect to gratitude, again, there are three kinds<sup>2</sup> of brightness. First, there is gratitude for the natural and spiritual blessings and the benefits which the soul has received. Secondly, there is the great delight which the soul has in praising<sup>3</sup> God, because it is absorbed with great vehemence in this praise. Thirdly, the soul praises God because of what He is, and this praise is much more profound and delectable.

## STANZA IV

**How gently and lovingly thou awakenest in my bosom,  
Where thou dwellest secretly and alone!  
And in thy sweet breathing, full of blessing and glory, How  
delicately thou inspirest my love!**

## EXPOSITION

**H**ERE the soul turns to its Spouse with great love, extolling Him and giving Him thanks for two wondrous effects which He sometimes produces within it by means of this union, noting likewise in what way He produces each and also the effect upon itself which in each case is the result thereof.

2. The first effect is the awakening of God in the soul, and the means whereby this is produced are those of gentleness and love. The second effect is the breathing of God in the soul and the means thereof are in the blessing and glory that are communicated to the soul in this breathing. And that which is produced thereby in the soul is a delicate and tender inspiration of love.

3. The stanza, then, has this meaning: Thine awakening, O Word

<sup>1</sup> *Isaias* xliii, 21.

<sup>3</sup> S: 'in loving.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'three principal kinds.'

and Spouse, in the centre and depth of my soul, which is its pure and inmost substance, wherein alone, secretly and in silence, Thou dwellest as its only Lord, not only as in Thine own house, nor even as in Thine own bed, but intimately and closely united as in mine own bosom—how gentle and how loving is this!<sup>1</sup> That is, it is exceedingly gentle and loving; and in this delectable breathing which Thou makest in this Thine awakening, delectable for me, filled as it is with blessing and glory, with what delicacy dost Thou inspire me with love and affection for Thyself! Herein the soul uses a similitude of the breathing of one that awakens from his sleep; for in truth, the soul in this condition feels it to be so. There follows the line:

**How gently and lovingly thou awakenest in my bosom,**

4. There are many ways in which God awakens in the soul: so many that, if we had to begin to enumerate them, we should never end. But this awakening of the Son of God which the soul here desires to describe, is, as I believe, one of the loftiest and one which brings the greatest good to the soul. For this awakening is a movement of the Word in the substance of the soul, of such greatness and dominion and glory, and of such intimate sweetness,<sup>2</sup> that it seems to the soul that all the balms and perfumed spices and flowers in the world are mingled and shaken and revolved together to give their sweetness; and that all the kingdoms and dominions of the world and all the powers<sup>3</sup> and virtues of Heaven are moved. And not only so, but all the virtues and substances and perfections and graces of all created things shine forth and make the same movement together and in unison. For, as Saint John says,<sup>4</sup> all things in Him are life, and in Him they live and are and move, as the Apostle says likewise.<sup>5</sup> Hence it comes to pass that, when this great Emperor moves in the soul, Whose kingdom, as Isaias says, is borne upon His shoulder<sup>6</sup> (namely, the three spheres, the celestial, the terrestrial and the infernal, and the things that are in them; and He sustains them all, as Saint Paul says, with the Word of His virtue)<sup>7</sup> then all the spheres seem to move together. Just as, when the earth moves, all material things that are upon it move likewise, as if they were nothing, even so, when this Prince moves, He carries His court with Him, and the court carries not Him.

<sup>1</sup> Bg, P: 'is this awakening!'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'such immense sweetness.' C: 'such great sweetness.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg, P: 'all the creatures, powers.'

<sup>4</sup> St. John i, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Isaias ix, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xvii, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Hebrews i, 3.

5. Yet this comparison is highly unsuitable, for in this latter case not only do all seem to be moving, but they also reveal the beauties of their being, virtue, loveliness and graces, and the root of their duration<sup>1</sup> and life. For there the soul is able to see how all creatures, above and below, have their life and strength and duration in Him, and it sees clearly that which the Book of the Proverbs expresses in these words: 'By Me kings reign, by Me princes rule and the powerful exercise justice and understand it.'<sup>2</sup> And although it is true that the soul is now able to see that these things are distinct from God, inasmuch as they have a created being, and it sees them in Him, with their force, root and strength, it knows equally that God, in His own Being, is all these things, in an infinite and pre-eminent way,<sup>3</sup> to such a point that it understands them better in His Being than in themselves. And this is the great delight of this awakening: to know the creatures through God and not God through the creatures; to know the effects through their cause and not the cause through the effects; for the latter knowledge is secondary and this other is essential.

6. And the manner of this movement<sup>4</sup> in the soul, since God is immovable, is a wondrous thing, for, although in reality God moves not, it seems to the soul that He is indeed moving; for, as it is the soul that is renewed and moved<sup>5</sup> by God that it may behold this supernatural sight, and there is revealed to it in this great renewal that Divine life and the being and harmony of all creatures<sup>6</sup> in it which have their movements in God, it seems to the soul that it is God that is moving, and thus the cause takes the name of the effect which it produces, according to which effect we may say that God is moving, even as the Wise Man says: 'Wisdom is more movable than all movable things.'<sup>7</sup> And this is not because it moves itself, but because it is the beginning and root of all movement; remaining in itself stable, as the passage goes on to say, it renews all things. And thus what is here meant is that wisdom is more active than all active things. And thus we should say here that it is the soul that is moved in this motion, and is awakened from the sleep of its natural vision to a supernatural vision, for which reason it is very properly given the name of an awakening.

7. But God, as the soul is enabled to see, is always moving, ruling

<sup>1</sup> Bz: 'detraction.'

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs viii, 15.

<sup>3</sup> [Lit., 'with infinite eminence.'] S: 'with infinite immensity.'

<sup>4</sup> Bz, C: 'knowledge.'

<sup>5</sup> Bz: 'is moved and guided.'

<sup>6</sup> Bg, P: 'of all things and creatures.'

<sup>7</sup> Wisdom vii, 24. Bz has 'causes' for 'things.'

and giving being and virtue and graces and gifts to all creatures, containing them all in Himself, virtually, presentially and substantially; so that in one single glance the soul sees that which God is in Himself and that which He is in His creatures. Even so, when a palace is thrown open, a man may see at one and the same time the eminence of the person who is within the palace and also what he is doing. And it is this, as I understand it, that happens upon this awakening and glance of the soul. Though the soul is substantially in God, as is every creature, He draws back from before it some of the veils and curtains which are in front of it, so that it may see of what nature He is; and then there is revealed to it, and it is able to see<sup>1</sup> (though somewhat darkly, since not all the veils are drawn back) that face of His that is full of graces. And, since it is moving all things by its power, there appears together with it that which it is doing, and it appears to move in them, and they in it, with continual movement; and for this reason the soul believes that God has moved and awakened, whereas in reality that which has moved and awakened is itself.

8. For such is the lowly nature of this kind of life which we live<sup>2</sup> that we believe others to be as we are ourselves; and we judge others as we are ourselves, so that our judgment proceeds from ourselves and begins with ourselves and not outside ourselves. In this way the thief believes that others steal likewise; and he that lusts, that others also are lustful like himself;<sup>3</sup> and he that bears malice, that others bear malice, his judgment proceeding from his own malice; and the good man thinks well of others, his judgment proceeding from the goodness of his own thoughts; and so likewise he that is negligent and slothful thinks that others are the same. And hence, when we are negligent and slothful in the sight of God, we think that it is God Who is slothful and negligent with us, as we read in the forty-third Psalm, where David says to God:<sup>4</sup> 'Arise, Lord, why sleepest Thou?'<sup>5</sup> He attributes to God qualities that are in man; for though it is they that are asleep and have fallen, yet it is God Whom he bids arise and awaken, though He that keepeth Israel never sleeps.

9. But in truth, though every blessing that comes to man is from God, and man, of his own power, can do naught that is good, it is true to say that our awakening is an awakening of God, and our uprising is an uprising of God. And thus it is as though David had said: Raise

<sup>1</sup> Bz: 'to descry.'

<sup>3</sup> S: 'that others are of his condition.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg adds: 'in our name.'

<sup>2</sup> Bz: 'of our consideration.'

<sup>5</sup> Psalm xliii, 23 [A.V., xliv, 23].

us up and raise us up again<sup>1</sup> and awaken us, for we are asleep and we have fallen in two ways. Wherefore, since the soul had fallen into a sleep, whence of itself it could never awaken, and it is God alone that has been able to open its eyes and cause this awakening, it very properly describes it as an awakening of God, in these words: 'Thou awakenest in my bosom.' Do Thou awaken us, then, and enlighten us, my Lord, that we may know and love the blessings that Thou hast ever set before us, and we shall know that Thou hast been moved to grant us favours, and that Thou hast been mindful of us.

10. That which the soul knows and feels in this awakening concerning the excellence of God is wholly indescribable, for, since there is a communication of the excellence of God in the substance of the soul, which is that breast of the soul whereof the lines here speak, there is heard in the soul an immense power in the voice of a multitude of excellences, of thousands upon thousands<sup>2</sup> of virtues of God, which can never be numbered. In these the soul is entrenched and remains terribly and firmly arrayed among them like ranks of armies and made sweet and gracious in all the sweetnesses and graces of the creatures.

11. But this question will be raised: How can the soul bear so violent<sup>3</sup> a communication while in the weakness of the flesh, when indeed there is no means and strength in it to suffer so greatly without fainting away, since the mere sight of King Assuerus on his throne, in his royal apparel and adorned with gold and precious stones, caused Queen Esther such great fear when she saw how terrible he was to behold that she fainted away, as she confesses in that place where she says she fainted away by reason of the fear caused by his great glory, since he seemed to her like an angel and his face was full of grace.<sup>4</sup> For glory oppresses him that looks upon it if it glorifies him not. And how much more should the soul faint here, since it is no angel that it sees, but God, Whose face is full of graces of all the creatures and of terrible power and glory and Whose voice is the multitude of His excellences? Concerning this Job enquires, when we have such difficulty in hearing a spark, who shall be able to abide the greatness of His thunder.<sup>5</sup> And elsewhere he says: 'I will not that He contend and treat with me with much strength, lest perchance He oppress me with the weight of His greatness.'<sup>6</sup>

12. But the reason why the soul faints not away and fears not in this

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'Raise us up twice.']

<sup>2</sup> P, S: 'of thousands.' Bz: 'of millions upon thousands.'

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, 'so strong.']

<sup>5</sup> Job xxvi, 14. P: 'of His face.'

<sup>4</sup> Esther xv, 16.

<sup>6</sup> Job xxiii, 6.

awakening which is so powerful and glorious is twofold. First, being, as it now is, in the state of perfection, wherein its lower part is thoroughly purged and conformed with the spirit, it feels not the suffering and pain that are wont to be experienced in spiritual communications by spirit and sense when these are not purged and prepared to receive them; although this suffices not to prevent the soul from suffering when it is faced with such greatness and glory; since, although its nature be very pure, yet it will be corrupted because it exceeds nature, even as a physical faculty is corrupted by any sensible thing which exceeds its power, in which sense must be taken that which we quoted from Job. But the second reason is the more relevant: it is that which the soul gave in the first line—namely, that God shows Himself gentle.<sup>1</sup> For, just as God shows the soul greatness<sup>2</sup> and glory in order to comfort and magnify it, just so does He grant it grace so that it receives no suffering, and protect its nature, showing the spirit His greatness, with tenderness and love, without the natural senses perceiving this, so that the soul knows not if it is in the body or out of the body. This may easily be done by that God Who protected Moses with His right hand that he might see His glory. And thus the soul feels the gentleness and lovingness of God proportionately to His power and dominion and greatness, since in God all these things are one and the same. And thus the delight of the soul is strong, and the protection given to it is strong in gentleness and love, so that it may be able to endure the strength of this delight; and thus the soul, far from fainting away, becomes strong and powerful. For, when Esther swooned, this was because the King showed himself to her at first unfavourably; for, as we read in that place, he showed her his burning eyes and the fury of his breast. But when he looked favourably upon her, stretching out his sceptre<sup>3</sup> and touching her with it and embracing her, she returned to herself, for he had said to her that he was her brother and she was not to fear.

13. And thus, when the King of Heaven has shown Himself as a friend to the soul, as its equal and its brother, the soul is no longer afraid; for when, in gentleness and not in wrath, He shows to it the strength of His power and the love of His goodness, He communicates to it the strength and love of His breast, and comes out to it from the throne (which is the soul) even as a spouse from his bridal chamber where he was hidden. He inclines to the soul, touches it with the sceptre

<sup>1</sup> Bg adds: 'kind and loving.'

<sup>3</sup> Bz: 'his wand.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg: 'this greatness.'

of His majesty and embraces it as a brother. The soul beholds the royal apparel and perceives its fragrance—namely, the wondrous virtues of God; it observes the splendour of gold, which is charity; it sees the glittering of the precious stones, which are knowledge of created substances, both higher and lower; it looks upon the face of the Word, which is full of graces that strike this queen (which is the soul) and likewise clothe her, so that she may be transformed in these virtues of the King of Heaven and see herself a queen indeed, and thus she may say of herself truly that which David says in the Psalm, namely: ‘The queen stood at Thy right hand in apparel of gold and surrounded with variety.’<sup>1</sup> And, since all this comes to pass in the inmost substance of the soul, it adds next:

**Where thou dwellest secretly and alone!**

14. The soul says that He dwells secretly in its breast, because, as we have said, this sweet embrace is made in the depth of the substance of the soul. That is to say that God dwells secretly in all souls and is hidden in their substance; for, were this not so, they would be unable to exist. But there is a difference between these two manners of dwelling, and a great one. For in some He dwells alone, and in others He dwells not alone; in some He dwells contented and in others He dwells displeased; in some He dwells as in His house, ordering it and ruling everything, while in others He dwells as a stranger in the house of another where He is not allowed to do anything or to give any commands. Where He dwells with the greatest content and most completely alone is in the soul wherein dwell fewest desires and pleasures of its own; here He is in His own house and rules and governs it. And the more completely alone does He dwell in the soul, the more secretly He dwells; and thus in this soul wherein dwells no desire, neither any other image or form or affection of aught that is created, the Beloved dwells most secretly, with more intimate, more interior and closer embrace, according as the soul, as we say, is the more purely and completely withdrawn from all save God. And thus He dwells secretly, since the devil cannot attain to this place and to this embrace, neither can the understanding of any man attain to a knowledge of the manner thereof. But He dwells not secretly with respect to the soul which is in this state of perfection, for it feels<sup>2</sup> this intimate embrace within it. Yet this is not always so, for, when the Beloved causes these awakenings to take place, it seems to the soul that He is

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xlv, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Bg: ‘which ever feels.’

awakening in its bosom, where aforetime He was, as it were, sleeping; for, although it felt and enjoyed His presence, it experienced it as that of the Beloved asleep in its bosom;<sup>1</sup> and, when one of two persons is asleep, the understanding and love of them both are not mutually communicated, nor can they be until both have awakened.

15. Oh, how happy is this soul that is ever conscious of God resting and reposing within its breast! Oh, how well is it that it should withdraw from all things, flee from business and live in boundless tranquillity, lest anything, however small,<sup>2</sup> or the slightest turmoil, should disturb or turn away<sup>3</sup> the bosom of the Beloved within it. He is there, habitually, as it were, asleep in this embrace with the bride, in the substance of the soul; and of this the soul is quite conscious, and habitually has fruition of Him, for, if He were for ever awake<sup>4</sup> within it, communicating knowledge and love to it, it would be already living in glory. For, if one single awakening of God within the soul, and one glance from His eye, set it in such bliss, as we have said, what would its condition be if He were habitually within it and it were conscious of His being awake?<sup>5</sup>

16. In other souls, that have not attained to this union, He dwells secretly likewise; and He is not displeased, since after all they are in grace, though they are not yet perfectly prepared for union. Such souls are not as a rule conscious of His presence save when He effects certain delectable awakenings within them, but these are not of the same kind or quality as that other awakening, nor have they aught to do with it. This awakening is not so secret from the understanding, or from the devil, as that other,<sup>6</sup> for something can always be understood concerning it by means of the movements of sense, inasmuch as sense is not completely annihilated until the soul attains to union, but still preserves certain actions and movements pertaining to the spiritual element, for it is not yet absolutely and wholly spiritualized. But in this awakening which the Spouse effects in this perfect soul, everything that happens and is done is perfect; for it is He that is its sole cause. Thus it is as if<sup>7</sup> a man awakened and breathed; the soul is conscious of a rare delight in the breathing of the Holy Spirit in God, in Whom it

<sup>1</sup> Bz, C, S: 'the Beloved sleeping in slumber.'

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'lest the very smallest speck,' a stronger expression than in the first redaction.] Bg, Bz read '[manifestation of] knowledge' [*noticia*] for 'speck' [*motica*]. P reads 'sign.'

<sup>3</sup> Bg: 'or move.'

<sup>4</sup> Bg: 'awakening.'

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'within it, for it well awake.'] Bg, Bz: 'for it well prepared.'

<sup>6</sup> Bg, Bz, P have confused renderings of this passage. Bz also reads: 'the understanding of man,' and Bg, P: 'another's understanding.'

<sup>7</sup> Bg: 'And then that aspiration and awakening are as if.'

is glorified and enkindled in love. Therefore it utters the lines following:

**And in thy sweet breathing, full of blessing and glory, How  
delicately thou inspirest my love!**

17. Of that breathing of God, which is full of blessing and glory and of the delicate love of God for the soul, I should not wish to speak, neither do I desire now to speak; for I see clearly that I cannot say aught concerning it, and that, were I to speak of it, it would not appear as great as it is.<sup>1</sup> For it is a breathing of God Himself into the soul, wherein, through that awakening of lofty knowledge of the Deity, the Holy Spirit breathes into the soul according to the understanding and knowledge which it has had of God, wherein He most profoundly absorbs it in the Holy Spirit, Who inspires it with Divine delicacy and glory, according to that which it has seen in God; for, His breathing being full of blessing and glory, the Holy Spirit has filled the soul with blessing and glory, wherein He has inspired it with love for Himself, which transcends all description and all sense, in the deep things of God, to Whom be<sup>2</sup> honour and glory. Amen.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So Bg, P. The other authorities [followed by P. Silverio] read: 'it would appear that it is.'

<sup>2</sup> Bg, P: 'be given.'

<sup>3</sup> So S. Bg, C, P: 'and glory in *sæcula sæculorum*. Amen.' Bz: 'and glory in the ages of the ages. Amen.' Bg, P add: '*Laus Deo*.'

## CAUTIONS

### INTRODUCTION

NONE of St. John of the Cross's admirers would contend that his minor prose writings, of which the *Cautions* is the first in order, have anything approaching the same value as the four great treatises by which he is chiefly remembered. They are but crumbs which have fallen from his table, and yet so well-furnished is that table and so genuine are they—so completely unified, in other words, is his teaching—that even those who are familiar with the great ascetico-mystical commentaries would deeply regret their loss.

The gift of St. John of the Cross for combining synthetic with analytic writing gives his minor prose works a character quite their own. He talked and wrote easily and fluently, it is true, but he evidently had a liking for condensed, maxim-like methods of expression: it will be remembered that St. Teresa dubbed him her 'little Seneca.' Probably a large proportion of these works have disappeared, for most of them were addressed to individuals—penitents of the author—and would naturally suffer the same fate as private letters. Some of the more impersonal, which are of fairly general application to those who lead the religious life, have escaped destruction, and one of the chief of these is that known briefly as *Cautions*.

More exactly, its title is 'Cautions which any who would be a true religious and would quickly attain to perfection must needs bear ever in mind.' It has nine sections, in which the religious is warned against man's three most fearful and deadly enemies—the world, the devil and the flesh. Being brief, they can easily be learned by heart and repeated in moments of leisure, perplexity or temptation. The words in the title 'attain to perfection' should be carefully noticed. Even in a short and purely ascetic treatise, the Saint has always in mind the goal of union with God.

The *Cautions* was one of the first of the Saint's writings to be composed when he retired to El Calvario and became regular confessor to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Beas. In her depositions for the Beatification process made at Beas in 1618, Ana de Jesús, one of the first

nuns of that convent and for some time the Saint's penitent, deposed that 'when he went away (from Beas), he left the nuns some cautions concerning the enemies of the soul and a few sentences for each one; and this witness has all those which he left her, with as many more as she could get, and she considers them to be of great value for her consolation.' Again, early in the seventeenth century, the diligent P. Alonso de la Madre de Dios wrote at the end of a description of the Saint's writings:

Other short spiritual treatises he composed, which have not yet been printed; among these, I have one containing nine cautions with which we may challenge the three enemies of the soul. These he wrote at the request of the Discalced nuns of Beas.<sup>1</sup>

There are other early testimonies to the authenticity of this opuscle, though, with certain others, it passed unmentioned by many witnesses who mention the *Ascent*, the *Dark Night*, the *Canticle* and the *Living Flame*.

Few early copies of the *Cautions* have survived: so slight a document was only too easily lost, though a multitude of copies of it must have been made, in view of that same brevity and the nature of its argument. It may be doubted if there were any Discalced friars and nuns who seriously aimed at spiritual progress and had not at some time handled a copy of this little treatise. But, as the printed editions of the Saint's works multiplied, the necessity for these copies grew less and in mid-eighteenth century P. Andrés discovered only a few, and those chiefly in Andalusia.<sup>2</sup> In them he found a considerable number of textual variants, which he attributes partly to revisions by St. John of the Cross himself, since, as he says, not all of them can very well be copyists' errors and there was less scope for correction in that type of treatise. This is quite possible, as we know that the Saint revised the brief 'Mount of Perfection' as well as the extensive *Spiritual Canticle* and *Living Flame*. Still, into generations of copies made at second, third or fourth hand, it is not surprising if there crept innumerable errors of all kinds and it is impossible to do more than speculate on their origin and nature.

The *Cautions* was not included in the *editio princeps* of 1618, nor, although he certainly knew it and mentioned it in his *History* (Bk. IV, chap. viii), did Fray Jerónimo de San José publish it in his edition of 1630. It first appeared in a Latin translation of St. John of the Cross's

<sup>1</sup> MS. 13,460, Bk. II, chap. viii.

<sup>2</sup> MSS. 3,653, 6,296, N.L.M.

works which was published at Cologne in 1639. [The first Spanish edition seems to have been published at Gerona, by P. Jerónimo de la Asunción, in 1650.] In 1667, another edition was published by P. Esteban de San José together with some of the *Maxims*. The first collected Spanish edition in which it appeared was that of Barcelona, 1693; here it bore the title 'Instruction and Caution which any man who would be a true religious and would quickly attain to great perfection must ever bear in mind.'

Of the few early copies of the opusculum which are still extant, the best is certainly MS. 6,296, which comes down to us from P. Andrés de la Encarnación and which we follow in this edition as did P. Gerardo also in that of 1912.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [P. Sobrino, in his *Estudios sobre San Juan de la Cruz*, etc. (see p. 240, n. 1, below), gives a critical edition of the *Cautions* on the basis of the Tardón-Granada MS. (here abbreviated TG), and studying in detail the whole question of transmission. His conclusion is that TG and 6,296 are the most reliable MSS. and should jointly form the basis of any future critical Spanish edition, occasionally corrected by 7,741 and 12,398. In the text which follows, such variants from TG as are not mere slips and can be shown in translation have been given in footnotes.]

## CAUTIONS

*which any who would be a true religious and would quickly attain to perfection must needs bear ever in mind. Addressed to the Carmelite Nuns of Beas.*<sup>1</sup>

THE religious who desires to attain quickly to holy recollection, silence, spiritual detachment and poverty of spirit,<sup>2</sup> wherein is enjoyed the peaceful refreshment of the Holy Spirit and whereby the soul attains to union with God, and frees itself from<sup>3</sup> the hindrances which come from all the creatures of this world, and defends itself from the wiles and deceits of the devil, and is disencumbered of itself,<sup>4</sup> must needs practise the following instructions.

2. With habitual care and with no further labour or other kind of exercise, failing not of his own part to do that which his state enjoins on him, he will very quickly come to great perfection, gaining all the virtues together and attaining to holy peace.<sup>5</sup>

3. To this end it must first be noted that<sup>6</sup> the evils which the soul receives come from the enemies aforementioned<sup>7</sup>—namely, the world, the devil and the flesh. The world is the least difficult enemy. The devil is the hardest to understand. The flesh is the most tenacious of all and its assaults continue for so long as the old man exists.

4. In order to conquer any one of these three enemies, it is necessary to conquer them all three; and, if one is weakened, the other two are weakened: and, when all three are conquered, no more war remains in the soul.

## AGAINST THE WORLD

5. In order to free thyself perfectly from the evil which the world can do to thee, thou shalt use three cautions.

<sup>1</sup> This title appears in many old editions and we see no reason to change it. The MSS. vary greatly here in form, though they agree in substance. In MS. 7,741 the title reads: 'Spiritual Cautions which must be used by the true religious against the enemies of the soul, by our blessed Father Fray John of the Cross.' [TG reads: 'Nine Cautions to be used against three enemies of the soul, taught by the holy Father Fray John of the Cross.']

<sup>2</sup> [TG: 'and spiritual poverty.']

<sup>3</sup> [TG: 'from all.']

<sup>4</sup> [TG: 'is freed from itself.']

<sup>5</sup> This paragraph is lacking in MS. 7,741, [TG] and a number of other copies.

<sup>6</sup> [TG: 'that all.']

<sup>7</sup> [TG: 'enemies of the soul.']

## CAUTION THE FIRST

6. The first caution is that for all persons thou shalt have equal love and equal forgetfulness, whether they be thy relatives or no, withdrawing thy heart from these as much as from those; more so, indeed, in some ways, from thy kinsmen, lest flesh and blood quicken with natural love, which is ever alive among kinsfolk, the which thou must ever mortify for the sake of spiritual perfection. Hold them all as strangers to thee; in this way thou dost serve them better than by setting upon them the affection which thou owest to God. Love not one person better than another or thou shalt go astray, for he whom God loves best is worthy to be loved best, and thou knowest not who it is that God best<sup>1</sup> loveth. But if thou art equally forgetful of them all,<sup>2</sup> as befits thee for holy recollection, thou shalt free thyself from going astray as regards the greater or lesser degree of love due to each. Think not of them at all, be they good things or evil things; flee from them in so far as thou fairly<sup>3</sup> canst. And, if thou observe not this, thou hast not learned to be a religious, neither shalt be able to attain to holy recollection, nor to free thyself from the imperfections that come to thee hereby. And if in this matter thou desire to allow thyself<sup>4</sup> a certain licence, the devil will deceive thee in one way or in another, or thou wilt deceive thyself, under some colour of good or of evil. In doing that which has been described lies security, for in no other way canst thou free thyself from the imperfections and evils which the soul obtains from creatures.

## CAUTION THE SECOND

7. The second caution against the world is with respect to temporal good things. Herein it is needful, if thou wouldst truly free thyself from this kind of evil and moderate the excesses of thine appetite, to abhor all kinds of possession and to have no care for them—neither as to food, nor clothing, nor any other created thing,<sup>5</sup> nor as to the morrow. Thou must direct this care to something higher, namely, to seeking the kingdom of God—that is, to not failing God—and the rest, as His Majesty says, shall be added unto us.<sup>6</sup> For He that cares for

<sup>1</sup> 6,296 [and TG] omit 'best,' which, however, is found in 7,741 and 12,398.

<sup>2</sup> 7,741: 'But, if thou treat them all equally.'

<sup>3</sup> 7,741: 'as thou humanly.'

<sup>4</sup> 7,741: 'to keep for thyself.'

<sup>5</sup> [TG reads: 'any other higher created thing,' and continues 'which is seeking the kingdom, etc.' This would appear to be a scribal error.]

<sup>6</sup> [St. Matthew vi, 33.]

the beasts will not be forgetful of thee. In this way shalt thou attain silence and peace in the senses.

### CAUTION THE THIRD

8. The third caution is very necessary if thou art to learn to guard thyself in the convent from all evil with respect to the religious. Many, through not observing it, have not only lost the peace and blessing of their souls, but have fallen, and habitually fall, into many evils and sins. This caution is that thou shouldst keep thyself with all diligence from setting thy thoughts upon what happens in the community, and still more from speaking of it; which may concern, or may have concerned, some religious in particular: thou shalt not speak of his character, or of his manner of life, or of any of his business, however grave it be, either under pretext of zeal or of desire to remedy matters, save to that person to whom it is right that thou shouldst speak of it at the appointed time. Nor shouldst thou ever be shocked or marvel at aught that thou seest or hearest, but shouldst strive to keep thy soul in forgetfulness of it all.

9. For if thou desirest to consider any of these things, even though thou live among angels,<sup>1</sup> many things in them will seem to thee to be amiss, since thou wilt not understand the substance of them. Take thou here for an example Lot's wife, who, because she was troubled at the perdition of the Sodomites and looked backward to see what was happening, was punished by God, who turned her into a statue of salt.<sup>2</sup> By this understand that, even though thou live among devils, God wills thee to live among them in such a way that thou look not back<sup>3</sup> in thy thought at their business, but abandon them wholly,<sup>4</sup> striving to keep thy soul pure and sincere with God, undisturbed by thoughts either of one thing or of another. Thou mayest take it for certain that convents and communities will never be without some occasion of stumbling, since there are never wanting devils who strive to overthrow the saints, and God permits this in order to exercise them and prove them. And if thou keep not thyself, as has been said, as though thou wert not in the house, thou canst never be a religious,<sup>5</sup> however

<sup>1</sup> 7,741 omits: 'even . . . angels.'

<sup>2</sup> [Genesis xix, 26. A.V. has: 'pillar of salt.' TG reads: 'by the Lord.']

<sup>3</sup> 7,741: 'God wills that, although thou live among them, thou look not back.' 12,398: 'and looked backward, the Lord punished her by turning her into a statue and stone of salt. By this understand that, etc.'

<sup>4</sup> [TG omits: 'wholly.']

<sup>5</sup> The editions read: 'never truly be a religious.'

much thou doest, nor attain to holy detachment and recollection, nor free thyself from the evils that lie herein. For, if thou do not this, however good may be thy aim and however great thy zeal, the devil will entrap thee either in one place or in another, and thou art already securely entrapped when thou dost permit thy soul to be distracted in any of these ways. Remember that which is said by the apostle Saint James: 'If any man thinketh himself to be religious, bridling not his tongue, this man's religion is vain.'<sup>1</sup> This is to be understood no less of inward speech than of outward.

### AGAINST THE DEVIL

10. These three cautions should be used by him that aspires to perfection, in order that he may free himself from the devil, his second enemy. To this end it must be noted<sup>2</sup> that, among the many wiles<sup>3</sup> used by the devil to deceive spiritual persons, the most ordinary is that of deceiving them under an appearance of what is good and not under an appearance of what is evil;<sup>4</sup> for he knows that if they recognize evil they will hardly touch it. And thus thou must ever have misgivings concerning that which seems good, when it is not commanded thee by obedience. Security and success in this matter come<sup>5</sup> from taking proper counsel in it.

### CAUTION THE FIRST

11. Let the first caution, then, be that, save when thou art so commanded by obligation, thou be moved to nothing, however good and full of charity it may seem, whether it be for thyself or for anyone within or without the house, without being ordered by obedience. In observing this thou gainest merit and security.<sup>6</sup> Avoid attachment<sup>7</sup> and thou shalt flee<sup>8</sup> from the devil and from evils of which thou knowest not, but whereof God shall call for an account of thee in His time. And if thou observe not this caution, both in little things and in great, however successful thou seem to be, thou canst not fail, either to a small or to a great degree, to be deceived by the devil. And, although thou do no worse than fail to be ruled in all things by

<sup>1</sup> St. James i, 26.

<sup>2</sup> [TG reads: 'thou must note.']

<sup>3</sup> So 12,398. The other authorities [and P. Silverio] read: 'the many cautions.'

<sup>4</sup> 7,741: 'and not of evil.'

<sup>5</sup> 12,398: 'Sanity in this matter comes.'

<sup>6</sup> [TG omits: 'and security.']

<sup>7</sup> [*Propiedad*: a difficult word to translate without paraphrasing. It means 'proprietaryship,' 'sense of ownership,' 'sense of control'—the 'propriety' of Fr. Augustine Baker.]

<sup>8</sup> 7,741, 12,398, [TG]: 'and thou fleest.'

obedience, thou strayest and art to be blamed ; for God prefers obedience to sacrifice, and the actions of a religious are not his own but belong to obedience, and if thou withdraw them from obedience, thou wilt have to account them as lost.

### CAUTION THE SECOND

12. Let the second caution be that thou never consider thy superior as less than if he were God, be the superior who he may, for to thee he stands in the place of God. And observe that the devil, the enemy of humility,<sup>1</sup> meddles herein greatly. If thou consider thy superior in the way that has been said,<sup>2</sup> thou gainest and profitest greatly ; if otherwise, thy loss and harm are great. Keep thyself, therefore, with great vigilance from considering his character, his ways or his habits or any of his other characteristics, for, if thou do this, thou wilt do thyself the harm of exchanging Divine obedience for human, by being moved, or unmoved, only by the visible characteristics of thy superior, instead of by the invisible God Whom thou servest in his person. And thy obedience will be vain, or will be the more unfruitful, if thou take offence at any displeasing characteristic in thy superior, or rejoice when thou findest him good and pleasant. For I tell thee the devil has ruined the perfection of a great multitude of religious by causing them to consider these characteristics, and their obedience is of very little worth in the eyes of God, because they have considered these things and not paid sole respect to obedience. If thou strive not until thou come to regard it as indifferent to thee, in so far as thine own feelings are concerned, whether this one or that be thy superior, thou canst in no wise become a spiritual person nor keep thy vows well.

### CAUTION THE THIRD

13. The third caution aimed directly against the devil is that thou strive ever to humble thy heart<sup>3</sup> in word and in deed, rejoicing at the good of others as at thine own, and desiring that others be preferred to thyself in all things, and this with all thy heart. And in this way shalt thou overcome evil with good and shalt cast the devil far from thee and shalt have joy of heart ; and strive thou to practise this most with respect to those who least attract thee. And know that, if thou practise

<sup>1</sup> 12,398 omits: 'the enemy of humility.'

<sup>2</sup> [TG: 'thy superior thus.']

<sup>3</sup> The editions add 'in thought.'

it not thus, thou shalt not attain to true charity neither shalt make progress therein. And love<sup>1</sup> ever to be taught by all men rather than to desire to teach him that is least of all.

### AGAINST THE FLESH

14. Three further cautions should be observed by him that desires to conquer himself and his sensual nature, which is his third enemy.

#### CAUTION THE FIRST

15. The first caution is that thou shouldst understand that thou hast come to the convent only that all may fashion thee and try thee. And thus, in order to free thyself from the imperfections and disturbances that may arise from the temperaments and habits of the religious, and to pluck advantage from every happening, thou must think that all who are in the convent are workmen who are to try thee, as in truth they are. For some have to fashion thee by word, others by deed and others by their thoughts against thee; and thou must be subject to them in all things, even as an image is subject to him that fashions it and to him that paints it and to him that gilds it. And, if thou observe not this, thou shalt not be able to overcome thy sensual nature and thy feelings, neither shalt thou be able to conduct thyself well in the convent with the religious, nor shalt attain holy peace nor free thyself from many evils and occasions of stumbling.

#### CAUTION THE SECOND

16. The second caution is that thou never fail to perform any good works because of the lack of pleasure or sweetness that thou findest therein, if it be fitting that they should be done in the service of Our Lord<sup>2</sup>; neither perform thou them only for the sweetness and pleasure that they give thee. It behoves thee equally to perform these and others that are distasteful to thee; otherwise it is impossible for thee to gain constancy and overcome thy weakness.

#### CAUTION THE THIRD

17. Let the third caution be that the spiritual man must never in his exercises set his eyes upon that which is delectable in them and

<sup>1</sup> [TG: 'And contrive to love.']

<sup>2</sup> [TG: 'of God.']

thence derive attachment to them, and perform them for this reason only; neither must he flee from that which is displeasing to him in them, but rather he must seek that which is toilsome and distasteful.<sup>1</sup> In this way he bridles his sensual nature; and if thou do otherwise thou wilt neither lose the love of thyself, nor wilt win and attain the love of God.

<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. and editions add here: 'and embrace it.'

# COUNSELS TO A RELIGIOUS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF PERFECTION

## INTRODUCTION

THIS instruction, addressed by St. John of the Cross to a religious of his own Order who had asked him for advice on the attainment of progress in the religious life, is very similar, both in content and in form, to the *Cautions*. We have no information as to who this religious was, except that he was not a priest, since the recipient of the instruction is addressed as 'Your Charity' whereas a priest was styled 'Your Reverence.'

The feature of this opusculum is the Saint's insistence that the religious should take no part in affairs, even in those of the community, unless they concern his office or he is commanded to attend to them under his vow of obedience. The perfect religious lives in the monastery as though he were alone in it. This is the central counsel of the four which St. John of the Cross gives in this instruction. Like St. Teresa, he was clearly quite convinced that the practice made for spiritual efficiency and progress.

These *Counsels* were published for the first time only in the Toledo edition of 1912, but they are undoubtedly genuine. There is an early copy in the Convent of the Discalced Carmelite nuns at Bujalance, which was formerly an heirloom in the family of a Commissary of the Inquisition named Don Miguel de Porcuna. Though it bears an inscription in another hand: 'Maxims of our father Fray John of the Cross and his writing,' it is certainly not an autograph, as P. Andrés de la Encarnación discovered two centuries ago;<sup>1</sup> still, as we doubtless owe its careful preservation to the pious belief to the contrary, we have no cause to regret this.

There is a second copy of the *Counsels* in an early Baeza manuscript of which P. Andrés has left a description.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Having examined this copy with the greatest attention,' wrote P. Andrés in a brief report that has been preserved with it, 'I say first of all that this opusculum is indisputably by our mystical doctor and father St. John of the Cross . . . and secondly that the hand is not his.'

<sup>2</sup> MS. 6,296: Papeles de Baeza.

## COUNSELS TO A RELIGIOUS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF PERFECTION<sup>1</sup>

**I**N a few words, your Holy Charity has asked a great deal of me, for which much time and paper would be necessary. As I find myself with neither of these things, I will endeavour to be compendious, and to set down only certain points or maxims which contain much in a small space and will lead anyone who observes them perfectly to achieve great perfection. He that would be a true religious and fulfil the duties of the state to which he has vowed before God to conform, and make progress in the virtues and enjoy the consolations and sweetness of the Holy Spirit, will be unable to do this if he strive not with the greatest care to put into practice the four maxims following, which are: resignation, mortification, the practice of virtues and solitude of body and of spirit.

2. In order to observe the first of these—resignation—he must needs live in the monastery as if no other person lived there; and thus he should never intermeddle, either in word or in thought, with the things that happen in the community, nor with those of individuals, nor must he take note of anything concerning them, be it good or evil, nor of their personal qualities. And, even though the world come to an end, he must neither remark upon them nor intermeddle with them, in order to preserve his tranquillity of soul, remembering Lot's wife, who, because she turned her head on account of the cries and the noise made by those that were perishing, was turned into hard stone.<sup>2</sup> This the religious must observe very straitly, and he will then free himself by its means from many sins and imperfections, and will preserve his tranquillity and quietness of soul, and will make great progress in the sight of God, and in that of men. And let great attention be paid to this, for it is of such importance that many religious, through not observing it, have not only never profited by the other works of virtue and religion that they have performed, but have continually fallen away and gone from bad to worse.

<sup>1</sup> This opusculum is published according to the Codex of Bujalance. In reality it has no title, except in the editions. The MS. begins with the words, *Jesus Mariae Filius*, which were undoubtedly not written by the Saint.

<sup>2</sup> [Genesis xix, 26. Cf. p. 201, above.]

3. In order to put into practice the second thing—mortification—and to make progress therein, the religious must very truly set in his heart this truth: that he has come to the convent only that he may be fashioned and tried in virtue, and that he is like the stone which has to be polished and fashioned before it can be set in the building. And so he must realize that all who are in the convent are no more than workmen whom God has set there solely that they may fashion and polish him as regards mortification. Some have to fashion him in word, telling him that which he would fain not hear; others in deed, doing in his despite things which he would fain not endure; others in character, being tiresome and troublesome to him both in themselves and in their behaviour; others in thought, so that he feels or thinks that they esteem him not and love him not; and all these mortifications and annoyances he must endure with inward patience, keeping silence for the love of God and realizing that he entered upon the religious life for no other reason than that he might be thus fashioned and made worthy of Heaven. And, if he entered it not with that intent, there was no reason why he should have done so; he should rather have remained in the world, seeking his own comfort, honour, credit and ease.

4. And this second maxim is absolutely necessary for the religious in order that he may fulfil the duties of his state and find true humility, interior quiet and joy in the Holy Spirit. And if he puts it not into practice, nor learns how to be a religious, or even the reason for which he entered the religious life, neither learns to seek Christ, but seeks only himself, he will neither find peace in his soul nor will he fail to sin and to be oftentimes troubled. For occasions of these failings will never be wanting in the religious life, nor would God have them wanting, for, since He brings souls into this life in order to prove and purify them, as gold is purified with fire and hammer, it is meet that there be not wanting trials and temptations of men and of devils, the fire of troubles and afflictions. In these things must the religious exercise himself, endeavouring always to bear them with patience and conformity with the will of God, and not in such a way that, instead of approving him<sup>1</sup> in his time of trial, God will have to reprove him for not having been willing to bear the cross of Christ with patience. Many religious, not realizing that they have entered the religious life for this purpose, endure others with difficulty, and such, when they come to their account, shall find themselves put to great shame and confusion.

<sup>1</sup> The Bujalance MS. has: 'instead of causing him to profit.'

5. In order to put into practice the third counsel, which is the exercise of virtues, the religious must needs have constancy in practising the acts of his religious life and of obedience, without any respect to the world, but for God's sake alone. In order that he may do so in this way, and without being deceived, let him never consider the pleasure or the displeasure which he finds in the work, in doing it or refraining from doing it, but only the reason which he has for doing it for God's sake. And so he must do all things, whether delectable or distasteful, with this sole aim of serving God thereby.

6. And in order to put this into practice determinedly, and with this constancy, and to bring forth the virtues speedily, let him ever have a care to incline himself rather to that which is difficult than to that which is easy, to that which is rough rather than to that which is smooth, and to the grievous and distasteful part of his work rather than to that which is delectable and pleasant in it. Let him not go about selecting that which is but a light cross, for that is an unworthy burden; and the greater the burden, the lighter is it, if borne for God. Let him ever strive likewise that his brothers be preferred to him in all comforts, and set himself ever in the lowest place, and this with a right good will. For this is the way to become great in spirituality, as God tells us in His Gospel: *Qui se humiliat exaltabitur*.<sup>1</sup>

7. To put into practice the fourth counsel, which is solitude, the religious must needs consider all the things of the world as ended, so that, when against his will he is obliged to engage in them, he may do so with as great detachment as if they were not.

8. And let him take no account of things without, since God has withdrawn him from them and led him to neglect them. Let him not do any business himself that he can do by means of a third person, for it greatly behoves him to desire to see nobody and to be seen of none. And let him carefully consider that if God will exact from any one of the faithful a strict account of any idle word, how much more will He not exact an account of every such word, on the day of reckoning, from a religious, whose whole life and works are consecrated to God?

9. I mean not by this that a religious should fail to perform the office which he holds, or any other that is required of him by his obedience, with all necessary and possible solicitude; he must do this in such a way that none can attach any blame to him, which neither God nor obedience demands. To this end let him endeavour to be instant in prayer, which he must not abandon even amidst the exercises

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xiv, 11.

of the body. Whether he be eating or drinking or speaking or conversing with persons in the world, or whatsoever else he be doing, let him ever be desiring God and having his heart affectioned to Him, for this is a thing most necessary for interior solitude, which demands that the soul let fall no thought that is not directed toward God and that he forget all things which belong to this short and miserable life and which pass away. In no wise let him seek to know aught, save how he may the better serve God and keep His ordinances the more faithfully.

10. If your Charity observe these four things with care, you will very quickly attain perfection, for they are of such mutual assistance to each other that, if a man come short in one of them, he loses thereby that wherein he was gaining and making progress with respect to the rest.

# SPIRITUAL SENTENCES AND MAXIMS

## INTRODUCTION

As we said in the introduction to our first volume, we know from the testimony of Ana María de Jesús, a nun of the Convent of the Incarnation at Ávila and one of the Saint's most beloved spiritual daughters, that St. John of the Cross was accustomed to give his penitents manuscript notes or 'papers' containing spiritual maxims and that M. Ana María had herself received a number of these.<sup>1</sup> Since his penitents in that Convent were numerous and he acted as director there for five years, he must have written a very large number of such 'papers' and to them must be added many more written for religious in Beas, Granada, Segovia and other convents and for persons living in the world.

Had we the whole of this material, it might well be unique both in size and in value, but there is no reason to think that any early collection of it was ever attempted, and the persecution of St. John of the Cross shortly before his death probably led many to whom he had addressed such 'papers' to destroy them. When, early in the seventeenth century, P. Alonso de la Madre de Dios visited all the Andalusian convents of the Reform previously to the Beatification process, he found vestiges here and there of the spiritual wealth which the Saint had bequeathed, as it were, to posterity, especially, as we should expect, at Beas. P. Alonso himself writes concerning this:

When the man of God left the convent of Beas to return to his own at El Calvario, he would leave each nun a sentence concerning virtue of the kind which he knew would be of the greatest profit to her, so that they might read them and be enkindled with fervour. So much did they esteem these that, even after many years had passed, I saw they still kept collections of them. Each time, when he returned to his convent, these nuns would tell him how much they missed his teaching. 'If I do not come back,' he would answer, 'imitate the sheep, and ruminate on what I have taught you while I have been here.' And this they did, meditating on what they had heard and

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, p. xxi.

reading his sentences from his little papers; and when he came back, he would ask them to give him an account of the profit they had derived from them.<sup>1</sup>

This testimony of P. Alonso's confirms the slightly earlier evidence of one of the Saint's Beas penitents, M. Magdalena del Espíritu Santo:<sup>2</sup>

In order to awaken fervour in the nuns, and to instruct them in true spirituality and the practice of the virtues, he would ask them certain questions, and discuss their answers to them, so that their time was well spent and they profited by it, for his words were bathed in light from Heaven. I contrived to note down some of these (questions and answers) so as to refresh myself by reading them when he was absent and could not discuss them. . . . When occasion offered, our venerable father wrote letters to the nuns of Beas—both sisters and superiors—which contained maxims and instructions of great importance.

One must not suppose that M. Magdalena was the only one of St. John of the Cross's penitents to make a collection of his spiritual maxims and notes of his informal instructions. It was a general custom to do this, and we know from the beatification and canonization processes that many collections of the kind were then in circulation. But there were others made by the Saint himself, one of which is extant, though in an incomplete form. We refer to the well-known Andújar MS., of which both P. Gerardo and M. Baruzi have published editions,<sup>3</sup> and which is the most extensive autograph of St. John of the Cross whose authenticity is not disputed. The other extant autographs are letters, annotations like that of the Sanlúcar Codex and official documents. P. Andrés de la Encarnación has left on record two statements as to the genuineness of this manuscript, dated January 19 and 20, 1760. The case which he puts forward, however, is universally admitted and there is no need to spend time in proving it, the more so as specimens of the Saint's hand are readily available for comparison with the published reproductions, or the original, of the Andújar MS.

### THE ANDÚJAR MANUSCRIPT

The history of this important document is somewhat obscure. An early manuscript belonging to the Discalced Carmelite friars of Burgos

<sup>1</sup> MS. 13,460 (N.L.M.), Bk. I, chap. xxxvii.

<sup>2</sup> [Cf. Vol. I, pp. xxii-xxiv.]

<sup>3</sup> *Autógrafos que se conservan del Místico Doctor San Juan de la Cruz*; Edición fototípica Toledo, 1913. *Aphorismes de Saint Jean de la Croix*, Paris, 1924.

contains a literal copy of the Andújar *Maxims* beginning: 'This treatise was given by our father Fray John of the Cross to M. Francisca de la Madre de Dios, nun of Beas.' The statement may quite possibly be correct. M. Francisca, whose testimony of 1618 we have already quoted,<sup>1</sup> was one of the Saint's penitents at Beas and the testimony continues thus:

... There was in his breast a great love of God; and his words, and even the papers and sentences that he wrote enkindled the souls of his hearers in Divine love and made them the more fervent. And the same effect has been experienced by this witness in herself. When she has found (and still finds) herself lukewarm, she has but to read some of these papers of his to become quite different.

Clearly the 'papers' and 'sentences' may perfectly well be those of the Andújar manuscript.

This came into the possession of the Convent of the Reform at Andújar, which was founded in 1590, and thence, probably as a gift, into that of a noble family, which owned the castle of Andújar, named Piédrola. It was here that P. Andrés saw it in 1760, when he was asked to examine it and pronounce judgment on its authenticity as an autograph. His judgment being favourable, the manuscript was even more carefully preserved than before, until in 1918, after an accident had all but resulted in its being destroyed by fire, it was presented by the family to the church of Santa María la Mayor, Andújar, where it can now be seen.

The manuscript lacks the short preface which we find in the Burgos copy (p. 214, below) and which it undoubtedly also possessed until the single folio containing it became lost. This preface describes the object of these 'sayings of light and love': they will be 'of discretion for the journeyer, of light for the journey and of love for the journeying.' There is no 'worldly rhetoric' in them, no 'loquacity and arid eloquence'; they 'speak words to the heart, bathed in sweetness and love' in which God takes pleasure. This is the precise truth. The maxims are simple and unadorned, and, though they have the link and the unity of the Christian perfection to which they point the reader, they can quite well be disconnected one from another, or their order can be changed without any great violence being done to them. They hold no secret of the spiritual life, and initiate us into no ethical experience, with which the Saint's longer treatises have not familiarized

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. Vol. I, p. xxv.]

us. Their nature precludes them from developing any idea at length and in any case they are ascetic rather than mystical, and the full meaning of many of them can best be appreciated if we relate them with passages from the mystical treatises with which they have doctrinal affinity.

The twenty-fifth maxim is followed by what the Saint himself terms a 'prayer of the soul enkindled with love,' which, amid the inevitable aridity of the apothegms, forms a kind of literary oasis. In it St. John of the Cross pours out his soul in acts of the sincerest humility and deepest love; after this he returns to the ascetic life and takes up the maxim form again until the end of the opusculum. It is unnecessary here to summarize his teaching, so brief and so easily comprehended are the maxims themselves. Nor need we ask, with M. Baruzi, for whom they are intended. St. John of the Cross is primarily addressing his fellow-Carmelites, but also, in a secondary sense, all Christians who wish to make progress in virtue. In all his works, it may be added, he showed himself to be in sympathy with those who lived in the world: such was Doña Ana de Peñalosa, for example, yet he did not scruple to dedicate to her the most advanced of his treatises.

#### OTHER MANUSCRIPTS OF THE 'MAXIMS'

If we may judge by the scanty references to it which are to be found in early documents relating to the Saint, the Andújar MS. was hardly known at all in the seventeenth century. In all his peregrinations among the houses of the Order, P. Andrés appears to have found no single copy of it. From this we may fairly infer that the autograph was acquired by the Piédrola family at a very early date.

*Burgos.* The only other important MS. of this opusculum belongs to the Discalced Carmelite friars of Burgos. It contains only the first forty-nine maxims of this edition, which are given in the same order as in the Andújar MS. At the end of these a line is drawn across the page and beneath this there follow, in the same hand, forty-two further maxims which are not in the Andújar MS., no indication being given as to their source, except that at the end the copyist has written: 'This is by our venerable father Fray John of the Cross.' These maxims are also addressed to a Beas nun and were first published in the Barcelona edition of the works of the Saint (1693). They are found in the Barcelona MS. next to be described and both their content and

their form appear to us to confirm the external evidence of their authenticity.

On the next folio the same amanuensis has copied some further maxims, preceded by the words: 'Our holy Father, treating of the narrowness of the road which leads to life, says thus: "I would that I could convince spiritual persons. . ."' There follows an exact copy of the paragraph which in our edition of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* (Vol. I, p. 86), is the eighth of Book II, chapter vii; after this come fifteen maxims which seem to us to be only extracts from his writings made by another person. The MS. also contains some unimportant documents and a few poems.

*Barcelona.* The Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Barcelona (Biblioteca de Catalunya), has a manuscript containing maxims by St. John of the Cross preceded by the words: 'This paper was copied by our holy father Fray John of the Cross from another which was found in the convent of Beas.' Like the copy in the Burgos MS., and like the edition of 1693, it begins with the preface 'Moreover, O my God and my delight . . .', copies the forty-nine Andújar maxims, and finally, like these authorities, reproduces further maxims, under the heading 'Points of Love.' As far as No. 42, which describes the characteristics of the solitary bird (p. 230, below), the two manuscripts and the Barcelona edition agree exactly. From that point onward, however, there are few maxims found in both the Barcelona MS. and the Barcelona edition (the Burgos MS. ends at No. 49), the others occurring in the edition alone, which was no doubt prepared from a fuller MS. source than either of those mentioned. The exact divergences will be indicated in footnotes below.

From all this it will be clear that some of the maxims attributed to St. John of the Cross were actually written by him, while others were written by his disciples, whether as notes of his addresses or conversation, or as jottings from, or summaries of, his writings. We have described the Andújar autograph and the two MSS. which seem to us to contain maxims from St. John of the Cross's own hand. There are a large number of collections which probably consist of the work of his disciples. P. José de Jesús María, for example, and after him P. Jerónimo de San José, obtained and published copies of sayings attributed to the Saint. To these activities we owe the hundred maxims with which P. Jerónimo furnished the editor of the Latin edition of St. John of the Cross's writings (Cologne, 1639) and which he proposed to publish in Spanish in the eighth book of his *History of St.*

*John of the Cross* (Madrid, 1641), which book, however, never appeared.<sup>1</sup>

These hundred maxims were included in the edition of the Saint's works published at Madrid in 1649, and are placed near the beginning of it, following the introductory matter and nine of the Saint's letters. In this form the *Maxims* were reproduced in all the editions which followed, until that of Seville, 1703, which gave 365 sentences, one for each day of the year.

The Barcelona edition of 1693, as we have said, first published forty-nine maxims from the Andújar MS. and others which did not appear in that collection but are probably genuine. The importance of this innovation was completely lost upon the editor's contemporaries nor is it given much weight by the editor himself. The title-page merely says: 'In this latest impression are added cautions against the three enemies of the soul and a few fragments of maxims and sentences by the same author, which contain admirable and superior instruction.' In reality, this edition takes the first step towards the publication of a reliable text of the *Maxims*. The name of the person responsible for it has not come down to us but the publication of the new *Maxims* may be credited to the Discalced Carmelites of Madrid, who must have put him in possession of what they considered the best authenticated MSS. of the General Archives of San Hermenegildo. It would seem that at this time there existed collections of maxims and sentences which were partly based upon the Andújar MS. and it may well be that the Saint himself left collections in his own hand, from which they derived, although only one of these is still known to us.

The path taken by the editor of 1693 was not followed for long, for in 1701 there appeared in Seville a work entitled *Spiritual Sentences and Maxims*, edited by Francisco de Leefdael, who pursued an entirely different plan. He divides his maxims, which include many that he himself has extracted from the Saint's writings. (indicating their source), into twenty-five classes, each with a comprehensive title, such as 'Imitation of Christ,' 'Theological virtues,' 'Unruly appetites,' 'Fear of God.' Within each of these classes is summarized the Saint's principal instructions on the subject of it. The collection begins with the preface from the Andújar MS., which, however, the editor alters

<sup>1</sup> This we know from P. Andrés (*Memorias Historiales*, A. 39) who saw the MS. of this eighth book, containing 'one hundred sentences of our holy Father and nineteen more maxims, besides others which were crossed out in the manuscript.' [He gives further extracts from the MS., which are reproduced by P. Silverio, Vol. IV, pp. xlviii-xlix, but omitted here, as not affecting the main argument.]

with the object of improving its literary form. The 'Prayer of the soul enkindled with love' is included under the seventh head, but this, too, is considerably altered from the form of the Andújar autograph. Among the maxims are interspersed poems by St. John of the Cross and also some by St. Teresa. This edition was no doubt admirable for the purpose for which its pious author compiled it, but did nothing towards the establishment of an authentic text of the *Maxims*—indeed, it hindered the diffusion of the edition of 1693.

Most of the 365 sentences in the collected edition of the Saint's works published at Seville in 1703 are taken from Leefdael's edition. The new editor, P. Andrés de Jesús, who had played a great part in the preparation of the edition of 1701, mentions the Andújar manuscript ('written in the hand of the holy father himself') and describes the sentences not drawn from this source as 'derived from a few letters and from the four chief treatises which compose his works, for the greater convenience and utility of his readers.' These last are marked by the editor with an asterisk.

The *Maxims* have continued to be printed in this new form in all successive editions until our own. P. Andrés de la Encarnación devised an elaborate scheme for publishing them under five headings, but this was never carried into effect, and little can be said to have been lost by the omission, since it involved the perpetuation of the unscholarly procedure of setting the extracts made from the Saint's works by his disciples on the same level as his own original compositions. The Andújar maxims were not published in their original form till P. Gerardo's edition of 1912; P. Gerardo also reproduced the 365 sentences, the first 75 being taken from the Andújar manuscript and the remainder, with their divisions and classifications, from the Seville edition of 1703.

Our own edition of the *Maxims* is based entirely upon the manuscripts of Andújar, Burgos and Barcelona, with which we have collated the edition of 1693. The few additional sentences which we have included bear a reasonable guarantee of authenticity: ten of them (pp. 234-5) come to us from M. Magdalena del Espíritu Santo and fourteen more (pp. 235-6) from a copy made in 1759 by P. Andrés de la Encarnación from a manuscript belonging to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Antequera which also copies the maxims of the Andújar autographs. We have endeavoured to sift the Saint's authentic maxims and sentences from the compilations of his followers and to present only what came, beyond reasonable doubt, from his own heart and hand.

## SPIRITUAL SENTENCES AND MAXIMS<sup>1</sup>

### PROLOGUE

**M**OREOVER, O my God and my delight, my soul has desired, for love of Thee, to employ itself in these sayings of light and love for Thee, for, although I have the tongue wherewith to utter them, I have neither the deeds nor the virtue which pertain to them, and it is with these, my Lord, that Thou art pleased rather than with the language and the wisdom of them. Let other persons, who may be so impelled by them, perchance make progress in Thy love and service, wherein I am lacking, and let my soul find an occasion of comfort in having been the cause for which Thou findest in others that which is lacking in itself.

Thou, Lord, lovest discretion, lovest light, lovest love above the other operations of the soul. Wherefore these sayings will be of discretion for the journeyer,<sup>2</sup> of light for the journey and of love for the journeying. Far hence be worldly rhetoric; far hence the loquacity and arid eloquence of weak and ingenious<sup>3</sup> human wisdom, wherein Thou hast no pleasure; and let us speak words to the heart, bathed in sweetness and love, wherein Thou hast great pleasure, removing perchance causes of stumbling and offences from many souls that stumble unwittingly, and unwittingly do err, thinking that they are successfully following Thy dearest Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and becoming like to Him in their life, character and virtues, and in the form of the detachment and purity<sup>4</sup> of their spirit. But do Thou grant it, Father of mercies, for without Thee, Lord, naught will be accomplished.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We do not know if the Saint gave any title to these opuscles; this title, however, which we have taken over from the old editions, is quite a suitable one. In the prologue which stands at the beginning of some of the collections, he describes them, very beautifully and very aptly, as 'sayings of light and love.'

<sup>2</sup> B, Bg and the 1693 edition read: 'for the journeying.' [P. Silverio follows these authorities.] The emendation [adopted in the text] is found in a number of other editions.

<sup>3</sup> Thus B, Bg. The editions have: 'weak and deceitful' [*engañoso* for *ingenioso*].

<sup>4</sup> Thus B, Bg. The 1693 edition reads: 'and poverty' [*pobreza* for *pureza*].

<sup>5</sup> This prologue is not found in the autograph MS. of Andújar, but it occurs in B, Bg and 1693 and is indisputably genuine.

MAXIMS AND SENTENCES FROM THE AUTOGRAPH  
MANUSCRIPT OF ANDÚJAR

1. The Lord has ever revealed to mortals the treasures of His wisdom and His spirit; but now that wickedness is revealing her face more and more clearly, He reveals them in large measure.

2. O Lord,<sup>1</sup> my God! Who that seeks Thee with simple and pure love will fail to find Thee much to his desire and will, since Thou showest Thyself first of all and goest out to meet them that desire Thee?

3. Though the road is plain and easy for men of good will, he that journeys upon it will not journey far and will find much trial therein if he have not good feet and courage, and the perseverance that comes from courage, directed to the same end.

4. Better is it to be heavy-laden and near one that is strong than relieved of one's load and near one that is weak. When thou art heavy-laden thou art near to God, Who is thy strength and is with them that are in trouble. When thou art relieved, thou art near but to thyself, who art thine own weakness. For the virtue and strength of the soul grows and is confirmed by trials of patience.

5. He that desires to be alone, without the support of a master<sup>2</sup> and guide, will be like the tree that is alone in the field and has no owner. However much fruit it bears, passers-by will pluck it all, and it will not mature.

6. The tree that is cultivated and kept with the favour of its owner gives in due season the fruit that is expected of it.

7. The soul that is alone and without a master, and has virtue,<sup>3</sup> is like the burning coal that is alone. It will grow colder rather than hotter.

8. He that falls alone remains on the ground alone and holds his soul of small account, since he trusts it to himself alone.

9. If thou fearest not to fall alone, how dost thou presume to rise alone? See how much more can be done by two together than by one alone!

10. He that falls heavily laden will have difficulty in rising with his load.

<sup>1</sup> B, Bg omit: 'O Lord,' and end the previous maxim: 'the Lord reveals them in much greater measure.'

<sup>2</sup> The Saint first wrote: 'without master.' The amended version given in the text is in his own hand.

<sup>3</sup> B, Bg omit: 'and has virtue.' The Saint added: 'and without a master,' as an afterthought, as the MS. clearly shows, to make his full meaning explicit.

11. And he that falls and is blind will not, in his blindness, rise up alone; and if he rise up alone he will journey whither it is not fitting.

12. More does God desire of thee the least degree of purity of conscience than all the works that thou canst do.

13. More does God desire of thee the least degree of obedience and submission than all those services that thou thinkest to do Him.

14. More does God esteem in thee an inclination towards aridity and suffering for love of Him than all the consolations and spiritual visions and meditations that may be thine.

15. Renounce thy desires and thou shalt find that which thy heart desires. How knowest thou if thy desire<sup>1</sup> is according to God?

16. O sweetest love of God that art so little known! He that has found the veins of this mine<sup>2</sup> has found rest.

17. Since if thou fulfil thy desire thou wilt have a double measure of bitterness, desire not to fulfil it even if thou remain in bitterness.

18. Greater unfitness and impurity has the soul in its journey to God if it has within itself the smallest appetite for things of the world than if it were burdened with all the hideous and persistent temptations and all the darkness describable, provided that its rational will refuses them entrance. For the soul that is in the latter case can with confidence approach God to do the will of His Majesty, Who says: 'Come to Me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.'<sup>3</sup>

19. More pleasing to God is the soul that in aridity and trial submits to that which is reason than the soul which fails to do this but receives consolations in everything that it does.

20. More pleasing to God is one good work, howsoever small it be, that is done in secret with no desire that it shall be known than a thousand that are done with the desire that they may be known of men. For he that with purest love does such works for God's sake not only cares nothing if men see him, but does them not even that God Himself may know it. Such a man, even though God were never to know it, would not cease to do Him the same services with the same joy and purity of love.

21. A good work performed in purity, and wholly for God's sake, in a breast that is pure, makes a kingdom wholly for its master.<sup>4</sup>

22. Twofold are the difficulties of a bird that is caught by the lime:

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'thy appetite.']

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'found its veins.']

<sup>3</sup> St. Matthew xi, 28.

<sup>4</sup> [The order of the Spanish words is kept here though it would seem that 'in a breast that is pure' should follow 'kingdom.']

first it has to free itself and then to make itself clean. And twofold are the troubles of him that fulfils his desire: first, he must free himself, and, once free, must purify himself from that which has clung to him.

23. He that allows not himself to be carried away by his desires will soar upward with ease according to the spirit, even as the bird that lacks no feathers.

24. The fly that clings to honey impedes its flight; and the soul that would cling to spiritual sweetness impedes its liberty and contemplation.

25. Take thou no heed of the creatures if thou wilt keep the image of God clearly and simply in thy soul, but empty thy spirit of them, and withdraw far from them, and thou shalt walk in the Divine light,<sup>1</sup> for God is not like to the creatures.

#### A PRAYER OF THE SOUL ENKINDLED WITH LOVE

Lord, God, my Beloved! If Thou still rememberest my sins and so doest not that which I am ever beseeching of Thee, do Thou Thy will as concerning them, my God, for it is this that I most desire, and exercise Thy goodness and mercy and Thou shalt be known in them<sup>2</sup>; and if Thou awaitest my works in order to grant me my prayer by means of them, do Thou grant them to me and work them in me, and impose on me the penalties that Thou wilt accept, and let Thy will be done. And if Thou awaitest not my works, for what then dost Thou wait, my most merciful Lord? Wherefore tarriest Thou? For if after all it be grace and mercy which I entreat of Thee in Thy Son, take Thou my mite, since Thou desirest it, and grant me this good thing, since Thou desirest it likewise.

Who can free himself from limitations and base modes of acting, if Thou raise him not up to Thyself, my God, in purity of love?

How will a man that is engendered and nurtured in baseness rise up to Thee, if Thou, O Lord, raise him not up with the hand wherewith Thou didst make him?

Thou wilt not take from me, my God, that which once Thou gavest me in Thine only Son Jesus Christ, in Whom Thou gavest me all that I desire; wherefore I shall rejoice that Thou wilt not tarry if I wait for Thee.

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the Divine lights.']

<sup>2</sup> [I.e., in the sins, not in the goodness and mercy, as the gender of the Spanish pronoun shows.]

With what procrastinations<sup>1</sup> dost thou wait, since thou canst even now love God in thy heart?

Mine are the heavens and mine is the earth; mine are the people, the righteous are mine and mine are the sinners; the angels are mine and the Mother of God, and all things, are mine; and God Himself is mine and for me, for Christ is mine and all for me. What, then, dost thou ask for and seek, my soul? Thine is all this, and it is all for thee.

Consider not thyself as mean, neither pay heed to the crumbs which fall from thy Father's table. Go thou forth from them and glory in thy glory. Hide thee therein and rejoice and thou shalt have the desires of thy heart.

26. The spirit that is indeed pure concerns not itself with advertence to exterior things, or with human respects, but inwardly, alone and withdrawn from all forms, and in delectable tranquillity, it communes with God, for the knowledge of Him is in Divine silence.<sup>2</sup>

27. The soul enkindled with love is a soul that is gentle, meek, humble and patient.

28. The soul that is hard becomes harder through love of its own self. If in Thy love, O good Jesus, Thou softenest<sup>3</sup> not the soul, it will persist for ever in its natural hardness.

29. He that loses an opportunity<sup>4</sup> is like one that has let a bird fly out of his hand, for he will not regain it.

30. I knew Thee not, my Lord, because I still desired to know and delight in things.

31. Let everything be changed, and that willingly, Lord God, so that we may find rest in Thee.

32. One single thought of a man is of greater worth than the whole world; wherefore God alone is worthy of it.

33. For that which cannot be felt, that which thou feelest<sup>5</sup> not; for that which can be felt, sense; and for the spirit of God, thought.

34. Consider that thy guardian angel does not always move the desire<sup>6</sup> to act, though he ever illumines the reason. Wherefore stay

<sup>1</sup> B, Bg: 'With what discretion.' [The phrase, *con qué dilaciones*, is an unusual one, and *discreción* might read more naturally. The sense is apparently: 'Why wait upon God's expected grace when you can love Him now?']

<sup>2</sup> B, Bg, 1693: 'is Divine knowledge.'

<sup>3</sup> B, Bg, 1693: 'Thou sanctifiest.'

<sup>4</sup> B, Bg, 1693: 'He that loses a prayer' [*oración for ocasión*].

<sup>5</sup> The MS. is imperfect here: the reading 'that which does not feel' is admissible [and certainly preferable]; B, Bg, 1693 read as in the text.

<sup>6</sup> ['Desire,' in this and the next paragraph, is *apetito*, 'appetite.']

thou not for desire before thou perform a virtuous deed, since reason and understanding suffice thee.

35. The desire gives the angel no occasion to move it when it is set upon aught beside.

36. My spirit has dried up in me, because it forgets to feed upon Thee.

37. This that thou seekest and that thou most desirest thou wilt not find by this way of thine, neither by lofty contemplation, but in deep humility and submissiveness of heart.

38. Weary not thyself, for thou shalt not enter into spiritual delight and sweetness<sup>1</sup> if thou give not thyself to mortification of all that thou desirest.

39. Consider that it is the most delicate flower that soonest withers and loses its fragrance. Wherefore beware thou of seeking to walk in the way of spiritual delight, for thou shalt not be constant. But choose thou for thyself spiritual vigour, and have attachment to naught, and thou shalt find sweetness and peace in abundance; for fruit that is both delicious and lasting is gathered in country that is cold and dry.

40. Remember that thy flesh is weak and that naught belonging to the world can give strength or consolation to thy spirit; for that which is born of the world is worldly, and that which is born of the flesh is fleshly, and true spirituality is born of the spirit of God alone, which is communicated neither through the world nor through the flesh.

41. Enter into account with thy reason to do that which it counsels thee on the road to God, and it will be of greater worth to thee with respect to thy God than all the works that thou doest without this counsel and than all the spiritual delights that thou seekest.<sup>2</sup>

42. Blessed is he that puts aside his pleasure and inclination and regards things according to reason and justice in order to perform them.

43. He that acts according to reason is like one that eats of substantial food, and he that is moved by the desire of his will is like one that eats watery fruit.

44. Thou, Lord, turnest gladly and lovingly to exalt<sup>3</sup> him that offends Thee, and I turn not to exalt and honour him that angers me.

45. O powerful Lord, if a spark of Thy empire of justice has so

<sup>1</sup> Bg, 1693: 'into the delight and sweetness of Christ.' B: 'into the delight and wisdom of Christ.'

<sup>2</sup> In Bg this maxim ends with the words: 'road to God.'

<sup>3</sup> [The word here twice translated 'exalt' is *levantar*, 'raise,' 'lift up.' In the first clause it seems to mean 'lift up' in the sense of 'aid,' but in the second clause the conjunction of the verb with 'honour' suggests another sense.]

great an effect in the case of a prince who is mortal and who governs and moves the peoples, what effect will Thy omnipotent justice have upon the righteous man and the sinner?<sup>1</sup>

46. If thou purify thy soul of material<sup>2</sup> possessions and desires, thou shalt understand things in spirit; and if thou deny thy desire with respect to them thou shalt enjoy the truth that is in them, understanding that which is sure in them.

47. My Lord God, Thou art no stranger to him that makes not himself a stranger to Thee. How do they say that Thou dost absent Thyself?

48. Truly a man has conquered all things if the pleasure that they bring moves him not to joy and the insipidity which they leave behind causes him not sorrow.

49. If thou desirest to attain to holy recollection, thou shalt attain it, not by admitting, but by refusing.

50. If I go, my God, everywhere with Thee, it will everywhere go well with me, even as I desire it should go well with Thee.<sup>3</sup>

51. That man will not be able to attain to perfection who endeavours not to be satisfied with nothing, so that his natural and spiritual concupiscence may be content with emptiness; for this is needful if a man would attain to the highest tranquillity and peace of spirit; and in this way the love of God is almost continually in action in the simple and pure soul.

52. Since God is inaccessible, see that thou concern not thyself with how much thy faculties can comprehend and thy senses can perceive, that thou be not satisfied with less and that thy soul lose not the agility that is needful for one that would attain to Him.

53. As one that drags a cart uphill, even so does that soul journey toward God that shakes not off anxiety and quenches not the appetite.

54. It is not the will of God that the soul allow aught to trouble it, or suffer trials; if it suffer them because of the adversities of the world, this comes from the weakness of its virtue; for the soul of the perfect man rejoices in that which causes the imperfect soul affliction.

55. On the road to life there is very little bustle and business, and it requires mortification of the will rather than much knowledge. He

<sup>1</sup> This maxim is not found in B, Bg.

<sup>2</sup> [The Spanish has *extraño*, 'strange': the same word is rendered 'stranger' in the next paragraph.]

<sup>3</sup> In B, Bg, 1693 the maxims which correspond with those of the Andújar MS. end here, and there follow others, under the title 'Points of Love,' which will be found on p. 227, below.

that cumber himself least with things and pleasures will go farthest along that road.

56. Think not that pleasing God lies so much in performing numerous good works as in performing them with good will, and without attachment<sup>1</sup> and respect to persons.

57. At eventide they will examine thee in love. Learn to love as God desires to be loved and lay aside thine own temperament.

58. See that thou meddle not in the affairs of others, nor even allow them to pass through thy memory, for perchance thou wilt be unable to fulfil thine own task.

59. Think not that, because in yonder man there shine not the virtues which thou hast in mind, he will not be precious in God's sight for that which thou hast not in mind.

60. Man knows not either how to rejoice aright or how to grieve aright, for he understands not the distance that there is between good and evil.

61. See that thou become not of a sudden sorrowful because of the adversities that are in the world, since thou knowest not the blessings that they bring with them, these being ordained in the judgments of God for the everlasting joy of the elect.

62. Rejoice thou not in temporal prosperity, since thou knowest not of a certainty that it assures thee eternal life.

63. In tribulation, draw near to God with confidence and thou shalt be strengthened and illumined and instructed.

64. In joys and pleasures draw near at once to God with fear and truth, and thou shalt neither be deceived nor wrapped up in vanity.

65. Take God for thy Spouse and for a Friend with Whom thou walkest continually, and thou shalt not sin, and shalt learn to love, and the things that are needful shall be wrought prosperously for thee.

66. Without labour thou shalt subject people and things shall serve thee, if thou forget both them and thyself.

67. Betake thyself to rest, putting anxieties far from thee and caring not at all for whatsoever comes to pass, and thou shalt serve God as He wills and take thine ease in Him.

68. Behold, God reigns not save in the disinterested and peaceful soul.

69. Though thou perform many actions, yet thou shalt make no progress in perfection if thou learn not to deny thy will and to submit thyself, losing all anxiety concerning thyself and thine own business.

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. p. 202, n. 7, above.]

70. What profit is it that thou give one thing to God if He asks of thee another? Consider that which will please God and do it; in this way shalt thou better satisfy thy heart than with that to which thou thyself inclinest.

71. How presumest thou to take thine ease so fearlessly since thou must appear before God to give an account of the least of thy words and thoughts?

72. Behold how many are they that are called and how few they that are chosen! And see that, if thou have no care for thyself, thy perdition is more certain than thine amendment, especially since so narrow is the way that leads to eternal life.

73. Rejoice not vainly, for thou knowest how many sins thou hast committed and thou knowest not how thou standest with God; but fear, yet have confidence.

74. Since when thine hour of reckoning comes it will grieve thee that thou hast not employed this time in the service of God, wherefore dost thou not order and employ it now<sup>1</sup> as thou wouldst wish to have done wert thou dying?

75. If thou desirest devotion to be born in thy spirit and the love of God and desire for Divine things to grow, cleanse thy soul of every desire and attachment and pretension, so that thou carest nothing for anything. For just as a sick man, when he has cast out the evil humour, is at once conscious of good health and there comes to him a desire to eat, just so shalt thou recover thy health in God if thou attendest to thyself in this matter; and otherwise, however much thou doest, it shall profit thee nothing.

76. If thou desirest to find peace and consolation for thy soul, and to serve God truly, content not thyself with this that thou hast left behind, for perchance thou wilt still have as many impediments as before, or more than before. But leave all these other things that remain to thee and withdraw thyself to one thing alone which brings everything with it—namely, to holy solitude, together with prayer and with Divine and holy reading, and remain there in forgetfulness of all things. For if these things are not incumbent upon thee of obligation, thou wilt be better pleasing to God in being able to keep thyself and make thyself more perfect than in gaining all other things at once. For what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world if he lose his soul?<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The word 'now' is the Saint's interlinear addition.

<sup>2</sup> The words 'if he lose his soul' have been crossed out in the autograph by a later hand than St. John of the Cross's.

## POINTS OF LOVE<sup>1</sup>

1. Straitly restrain thy tongue and thy thoughts and keep thine affection habitually fixed upon God, and He will grant thy spirit Divine fervour.

2. Feed not thy spirit on aught beside God. Cast away concern for all things and have peace and recollection in thy heart.

3. Have spiritual tranquillity in loving attentiveness to God, and, if it be necessary to speak, let it be with the same tranquillity and peace.

4. Have remembrance habitually of eternal life, and of the truth that they that are lowliest and poorest and count themselves as least shall have fruition of the chiefest dominion and glory in God.

5. Rejoice habitually in God, Who is thy health, and know that it is good to suffer in any way for him that is good.

6. Let us consider how necessary it is for us to be our own enemies, and to journey to perfection on the road of holy severity, and let us understand that every word we speak, save by command and under obedience, is laid to our account by God.

7. An intimate desire that God may grant thee that which His Majesty knows thou dost lack for His honour.

8. Crucified inwardly and outwardly with Christ, a man will live in this life with fullness and satisfaction of soul, possessing his soul in his patience.<sup>2</sup>

9. Have a loving attentiveness to God, with no desire to feel or understand anything in particular concerning Him.

10. Habitual confidence in God, esteeming in oneself and in one's sisters that which God most esteems—namely, spiritual blessings.

11. Enter into thy bosom<sup>3</sup> and labour in the presence of the Spouse, Who is ever present and loves thee<sup>4</sup> well.

<sup>1</sup> These are to be found in Bg and (with slight variations) in the edition of 1693 and in the MS. copy in the library of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Barcelona. Bg seems the most reliable authority and is accordingly followed in the text above.

<sup>2</sup> [Apparently a reference to St. Luke xxi, 19: *In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras.*]

<sup>3</sup> For *seno* ['bosom'] B, Bg have *cieno* ['slough,' 'mire']; Bg, however, has the correction *seno* and 1693 also reads *seno*.

<sup>4</sup> [The pronoun is feminine, as one would expect from the reference to 'sisters' in the last maxim. The feminine pronoun recurs in later 'Points'.]

12. Be unwilling to admit into thy soul things that have in themselves no spiritual substance, lest they make thee lose the desire for devotion and recollection.

13. Let Christ crucified be sufficient for thee, and with Him do thou suffer and rest; for which cause do thou annihilate thyself with respect to all things, both without and within.

14. Endeavour that things be naught to thee, and that thou be naught to things; forgetting all, dwell thou in thy recollection with the Spouse.

15. Love trials greatly and repute them of small account if thou wilt attain the favour of the Spouse, Who hesitated not to die for thee.

16. Have fortitude of heart against all things that move thee to that which is not God and be thou a lover of the Passion<sup>1</sup> of Christ.

17. Have interior detachment from all things and set not thy pleasure on any temporal thing and thy soul shall find such good things in recollection as it knows not.

18. The soul that walks in love<sup>2</sup> wearies not neither is wearied.

19. The poor man who is naked will be clothed; and the soul that is naked of desires, of willings and of nillings will be clothed by God with His purity, desire and will.

20. There are souls that wallow in the mire even as animals wallow in it, and others that soar like the birds which purify and cleanse themselves in the air.

21. One word spake the Father, which Word was His Son, and this Word He speaks ever in eternal silence, and in silence must it be heard by the soul.

22. We must measure our trials by ourselves, and not ourselves by our trials.<sup>3</sup>

23. He that seeks not the Cross of Christ seeks not the glory of Christ.

24. God conceives not love for the soul by considering its greatness, but by considering the greatness of its humility.<sup>4</sup>

25. He that is ashamed to confess Me before men, says the Lord, him will I also be ashamed to confess before My Father.<sup>5</sup>

26. Hair that is combed with frequency is untangled, and there will

<sup>1</sup> 1693: 'of the passions.'

<sup>2</sup> So B, Bg. The 1693 edition has: 'that walks enkindled with love.'

<sup>3</sup> [That is, presumably, we must brace ourselves to the trials that come—i.e. rise up to their measure—and not scale them down to our own measure, by saying that we can only bear trials within certain limits of intensity.]

<sup>4</sup> B: 'of its humility and contempt'; 1693: 'of its contempt and humility.'

<sup>5</sup> 1693 omits this maxim, which is, of course, simply a verse from the Gospel.

be no difficulty in combing it as often as one desires; and the soul that with frequency examines its thoughts, words, and deeds, which are like the hair, and that does all things for love of God, will find that its hair is quite free from entanglement. Then the Spouse will look upon the neck of the Bride, and will be captivated by it, and will be wounded by one of her eyes, namely by the purity of intention wherewith she performs all her acts. We begin to comb our hair from the crown of the head if we desire it not to be tangled; all our works must begin from the crown—that is, from the love of God—if we wish them to be without entanglement and pure.

27.<sup>1</sup> The heavens are stable and not subject to generation, and souls which are of heavenly texture are also stable, and are not subject to the generation of desires or to aught else, for after their kind they are like unto God, and are never moved.

28. Eat not of forbidden fruit, which is that of this present life, since blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill. That which God seeks to do is to make us gods by participation, as He is God by nature, even as fire converts all things into fire.

29. All the goodness that we have is lent to us and God considers it as His own.<sup>2</sup> It is God that works and His work is God.

30. Wisdom enters through love, silence, and mortification; great wisdom is it to be able to keep silence and to look neither at the words nor at the deeds nor at the lives of others.

31. All for me and naught for Thee.<sup>3</sup>

32. All for Thee and naught for me.

33. Allow thyself to be taught, allow thyself to be commanded, allow thyself to be brought into submission and despised, and thou shalt be perfect.

34. Five evils are caused in the soul by any desire<sup>4</sup>: first, it is made uneasy; second, it is confused; third, it is soiled; fourth, it is weakened; and fifth, it is darkened.

35. Perfection lies not in the virtues which the soul knows itself to have; it consists in those which Our Lord sees in the soul. And this is a closed book<sup>5</sup>; wherefore the soul has no excuse for presumption, but as regards itself must humble itself to the ground.

<sup>1</sup> Bg omits this maxim, which is found, however, in B and 1693.

<sup>2</sup> [I have ventured to make a slight correction in P. Silverio's punctuation of this sentence, which greatly improves the sense.]

<sup>3</sup> [For the meaning of this sentence, see p. 232; § 52, below.]

<sup>4</sup> [*apetito*.]

<sup>5</sup> [*Lit.*, 'closed burden.'] 1693 reads: 'closed letter' [which suggests the phrase used in the text].

36. Love consists not in feeling great things, but in having great detachment and in suffering for the Beloved.

37. The whole world has not the worth of a man's thought, for that thought is due to God alone; and thus whatever thought of ours is not centred upon God is stolen from Him.

38. The faculties and senses must not be employed wholly upon things, but only in so far as is unavoidable. With this exception all must be left free for God.

39. Look not at the imperfections of others, keep silence, and have continual converse with God. These three things will uproot great imperfections from the soul and will make it mistress of great virtues.

40. The signs of interior recollection are three: first, if the soul have no pleasure in transitory things; second, if it have pleasure in solitude and silence and give heed to all that leads to greater perfection; third, if the things which were wont to help it (such as considerations, meditations, and acts) now hinder it and the soul has no other support in prayer than faith and hope and charity.

41. If a soul becomes more patient in suffering and readier to endure lack of consolations, this is a sign that it is making greater progress in virtue.

42. The characteristics of the solitary bird are five. The first is that it soars as high as it is able. The second, that it can endure no companionship, even of its own kind. The third, that it places its beak against the wind.<sup>1</sup> The fourth, that it has no definite colour. The fifth, that it sings sweetly. These characteristics will belong to the contemplative soul. It must soar above transitory things, paying no more heed than if they were not. It must be so fond of solitude and silence that it can endure the companionship of no other creature. Its beak must be placed so as to meet the wind of the Holy Spirit—that is, it must respond to His inspirations, to the end that, by so doing, it may become more worthy of His companionship. It must have no definite colour—that is, it must desire to do no definite thing save that which is the will of God. It must sing sweetly in the contemplation and love of its Spouse.

43. The habits of voluntary imperfections which are never completely conquered not only hinder Divine union, but also prevent a soul from approaching perfection. Such imperfections are: the habit of much speaking, little unconquered attachments, such as for persons,

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to the air.']

clothes, cells, books, different kinds of food, and other conversations and preferences in seeking relish in things, in knowing and hearing them, and other matters like to these.<sup>1</sup>

44. If thou desirest to glory, and desirest not to appear stupid and foolish, put away from thee things that are not thine, and thou wilt have glory of that which remains. But, in truth, if thou puttest away all things that are not thine, thou wilt be changed into nothing, for thou must glory in nothing if thou desirest not to fall into vanity. But let us descend now especially to the gifts of those graces which make men full of grace and pleasing in the eyes of God. It is certain that thou shouldst not glory in those gifts since thou knowest not yet if thou hast them.<sup>2</sup>

45. Oh, how sweet will Thy presence be to me, Thou that art the highest Good. I will approach Thee in silence<sup>3</sup> and will uncover Thy feet<sup>4</sup> that Thou mayest be pleased to unite me unto Thee in marriage, and I will not take mine ease until I have fruition of Thyself in Thine arms. And now I entreat Thee, Lord, not to forsake me at any time in my recollection since I am a spendthrift of my soul.

46. If thou be detached from that which is without and dispossessed of that which is within, and without attachment to the things of God, neither will prosperity detain thee nor adversity hinder thee.

47. The soul that is united with God is feared by the devil as though it were God Himself.<sup>5</sup>

48. The purest suffering bears and carries in its train the purest understanding.

49. The soul that desires God to surrender Himself to it wholly must surrender itself to Him wholly and leave nothing for itself.

50. The soul that is in the union of love has not even the first movements of sin.<sup>6</sup>

51. The tried friends of God very rarely fail God, since they are above all that they can lack.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bg adds at this point: 'This is by our venerable father Fray John of the Cross.' This maxim (43) is not found in B or in 1693, both of which authorities go on to give others which are not in Bg and which we now reproduce. The numbering which we have adopted follows on continuously from the maxims already transcribed. Some of the maxims which follow, but not all, are found in B.

<sup>2</sup> This maxim is found in B.

<sup>3</sup> B ends this maxim here.

<sup>4</sup> [The reference is evidently to Ruth iii, 4, 7.]

<sup>5</sup> This maxim and the six which follow it are found in B.

<sup>6</sup> ['Of sin' is not found in the original.]

<sup>7</sup> B: 'that can make them fail.' [There is a slight play here on the words 'fail' (*faltar*) and 'lack' (*hacer falta*). The version of B makes the play explicit in English, but the sense is not so good.]

52. My Beloved, all that is rough and toilsome I desire for myself, and all that is sweet and delectable I desire for Thee.

53. That which we most need in order to make progress is to be silent before this great God, with the desire and with the tongue, for the language that He best hears is that of silent love.

54. Divest thyself of what is human in order to seek God.<sup>1</sup> A man employs a light in his outward life, so that he may not fall, but light acts in the contrary manner in the things of God. Wherefore it is better to be unable to see and the soul has more security.

55. More profit can be obtained from the good things of God in one hour than from our own good things in a whole lifetime.

56. Love to be unknown both by thyself and by others. Never look at the good things or at the evil things of others.

57. Walk in solitude with God; work in the mean; hide the good things of God.

58. To be prepared to lose and see all others gain at our expense belongs to valiant souls, to generous bosoms, and to liberal hearts. One of the qualities of such souls is that they will give rather than receive even till they come to give their very selves, for they consider the possession of themselves to be a great burden, and prefer to be possessed by others and withdrawn from themselves, since we belong rather to that infinite Good than to ourselves.

59. A great evil is it to have an eye rather to the good things of God than to God Himself. Prayer and detachment.

60. Behold that infinite knowledge and that hidden secret. What peace, what love, what silence is in that Divine Bosom! How lofty a science is that which God there teaches—namely, the science of that which we call anagogical acts, which so greatly enkindle the heart!

61. Great damage and harm is done to the secrecy of the conscience whensoever the fruit thereof is manifested to men, for in such case the soul receives as a reward the fruit of transitory fame. (1) Speak little, and meddle not in things where thou art not consulted. (2) Strive ever to have God present in thee and keep within thyself the purity that God teaches. (3) Excuse not thyself, neither refuse to be corrected by all; listen to every reproof with a serene countenance; think that God addresses it to thee. (4) Live in this world as though there were in it but God and thy soul, so that thy heart may be detained by naught that is human. (5) Count it the mercy of God if at times some good

<sup>1</sup> [P. Gerardo amended this obscure Spanish sentence to read: 'Simple faith in order to seek God.']

word is spoken of thee, for thou deservest none. (6) Never allow thyself to pour out thy heart, even though it be but for a moment. (7) Never hear of the weaknesses of others, and then, if anyone complain to thee of another, thou mayest tell him humbly to say naught of it to thee. (8) Make complaint of none, ask naught soever, or, if it be needful for thee to ask, let it be with few words. (9) Refuse not work, even though it appear to thee that thou canst not perform it. Let all find compassion in thee. (10) Contradict not; and in no way speak thou words that are not simple and clear.<sup>1</sup> (11) Let thy speech be such that none can be offended by it, and speak of things which it troubles thee not that all should know. (12) Deny not aught that thou hast, even though thou have need of it. (13) Be silent concerning that which God may give thee and remember that saying of the Bride: 'My secret for myself.' (14) Strive to keep thy heart in peace, and let naught that comes to pass in this world make thee uneasy—for consider that it must all come to an end. (15) Trouble not thyself either much or little as to who is against thee and who is with thee; and strive ever to please thy God. Pray to Him that His will may be done in thee. Love Him greatly, for this thou owest Him.

62. Twelve means<sup>2</sup> for arriving at the highest perfection: love of God, love of our neighbour, obedience, chastity, poverty, attendance at choir, penance, humility, mortification, prayer, silence, peace.

63. Never take man for an example in that which thou hast to do, howsoever holy he be, for else the devil will set his imperfections before thee. But imitate Christ, Who is the sum of perfection, and the sum of holiness, and thou shalt never go astray.

64. Seek in reading and thou shalt find in meditation; knock in prayer and it shall be opened to thee in contemplation.

65. The venerable and blessed father<sup>3</sup> Fray John of the Cross was once asked how a man went into ecstasy. 'By renouncing his own will,' he replied, 'and doing the will of God. For ecstasy is naught but the going forth of a soul from itself and its being caught up in God, and this is what happens to the soul that is obedient, namely, that it goes forth from itself and from its own desires, and, thus lightened of its load, becomes immersed in God.'

<sup>1</sup> [Spanish, *limpias*, 'clean,' but 'clear' seems to be the meaning, and I suspect that *No contradiga* means 'Contradict not thyself.']

<sup>2</sup> [Spanish, *estrellas*, 'stars,' 'guiding lights.']

<sup>3</sup> B has: 'The holy father.'

## MAXIMS THAT BELONGED TO MOTHER MAGDALENA DEL ESPÍRITU SANTO<sup>1</sup>

1. He that with pure love works for God not only cares not whether or not men know it, but does not even do these things that God Himself may know it. Such a one, even though it should never be known, would not cease to perform these same services and with the same gladness and love.

2. Another maxim for conquering the desires.<sup>2</sup> Have thou an habitual desire to imitate Jesus Christ in all His works, conforming thyself to His life, whereon thou must meditate in order to be able to imitate it and to behave in all things as He would behave.

3. In order that thou mayest be able to do this it is necessary that every appetite or taste be renounced, if it be not purely for the honour and glory of God, and that thou remain in emptiness for the love of Him Who in this life neither did nor desired to do more than the will of His Father, which He called His meat and drink.

In order that thou mayest mortify the four natural passions, which are joy, sadness, fear, and hope, follow thou this rule:

4. Strive always to prefer, not that which is easiest, but that which is most difficult; not that which is most delectable, but that which is most unpleasing; not that which gives most pleasure, but that which gives no pleasure. To prefer, not that which is restful, but that which is most wearisome; not that which is consolation, but that which is no consolation; not that which is greatest, but that which is least; not that which is loftiest and most precious, but that which is lowest and most despised; not that which is a desire for anything, but that which is a desire for nothing. To go about, seeking not the best things but the worst. And to have detachment and emptiness and poverty, with respect to everything that is in the world, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Against concupiscence:

5. Strive to work in detachment and to desire that others may do so.

6. Strive to speak in thine own despite and to desire that all may do so.

<sup>1</sup> The Maxims which we publish under this heading are the only ones which this religious left in her cell. Some of them will also be found in the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* [Vol. I, pp. 58-9] though with slight verbal differences.

<sup>2</sup> ['desires . . . desire'; *apetitos* . . . *apetito*.]

7. Strive to think humbly of thyself and to desire that others may do so.<sup>1</sup>

Among other things that he wrote, the Venerable Father once wrote down for each of the nuns one saying for their spiritual profit. I transcribed all these, but there have only remained to me these two which follow:

8. Be strong in thy heart against all things that move thee to that which is not God, and for Christ's sake love thou suffering.

9. Readiness in obedience, joy in suffering, mortification of the sight, the desire to know nothing, silence and hope.

10. Straitly restrain thy tongue and thy thought and fix thine affection habitually upon God, and the Divine Spirit shall give it great fervour. Read thou this often.<sup>2</sup>

### OTHER MAXIMS<sup>3</sup>

1. The farther thou withdrawest thyself from earthly things, the nearer dost thou approach heavenly things, and the more thou findest in God.

2. He that knows how to die to all things will have life in all things.

3. Withdraw from evil, work good and seek peace.

4. He that complains or murmurs is not perfect, nor is he even a good Christian.

5. Humble is he that hides himself in his own nothingness and knows how to abandon himself to God.

6. Meek is he that knows how to suffer his neighbour and to suffer his own self.

7. If thou wilt be perfect, sell thy will and give it to the poor in spirit; come to Christ through meekness and humility; and follow Him to Calvary and the grave.

8. He that trusts to himself is worse than the devil.

9. He that loves not his neighbour abhors God.

10. He that works lukewarmly is near to falling.

<sup>1</sup> [With §§ 4-7 may be compared *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, I, xiii, §§ 6, 9 (Vol. I, pp. 58-9 of this edition).]

<sup>2</sup> This maxim was found on the same page as the sketch of the Mount of Perfection [see Vol. I, p. xxiv, above]. There is good evidence [cited by P. Silverio, Vol. IV, p. 250, n. 1] for its genuineness.

<sup>3</sup> These Maxims, which we owe to the diligence of P. Andrés de la Encarnación, appear to us authentic. Others, which can be gleaned from the documents connected with the Beatification of St. John of the Cross, often express his thought, but are not written in the style with which we are familiar as his. These last, therefore, we have not included.

11. He that flees from prayer flees from all that is good.
12. Better is it to conquer the tongue than to fast on bread and water.
13. Better is it to suffer for God's sake than to work miracles.
14. Oh, what blessings will be those that we shall enjoy with the sight of the Most Holy Trinity!

## LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS

### INTRODUCTION

ONLY a very small number of the letters of St. John of the Cross have come down to us, by comparison with the not inconsiderable number which he must certainly have written during his life as a Discalced Carmelite. Before his profession his correspondence would probably have been but small, for Medina was so near to Salamanca that during his student days he must have been in close touch with his family. In those days family life was more real than it is now and travellers would often carry news and affectionate messages to distant relatives of persons from their home towns of whom they themselves knew comparatively little.

As soon as he joined the Reform, and particularly during his early days at Duruelo, Mancera, Pastrana and Alcalá, St. John of the Cross must have begun a frequent exchange of letters with St. Teresa. About the year 1579, during a journey from El Calvario to Baeza, Fray Jerónimo de la Cruz saw him burn a bundle of letters which he had received from St. Teresa, as an act of abnegation. There would have been a corresponding bundle somewhere in the possession of the Mother Foundress, had she been accustomed to keep letters; but one who was so continually journeying would have found it hard to make a habit of this, even had she so desired, and further, persecution was always sufficiently near at hand to make it unwise to preserve correspondence. Later, he wrote often to St. Teresa during his life in Andalusia, as well as to PP. Antonio de Jesús, Jerónimo Gracián and Nicolás Doria, on matters concerning the government of the Order.

Both on spiritual matters, too, and on the business of the Order, the Saint must have written many letters to the nearest of his disciples, such as PP. Juan Evangelista and Juan de Santa Ana. Further, we know from contemporary evidence<sup>1</sup> that he wrote to at least one lay person, Doña Ana de Peñalosa. But most of his letters on spiritual matters appear to have been addressed to Discalced Carmelite nuns, to many

<sup>1</sup> Deposition of M. Ana de San Alberto, Prioress of Caravaca (MS. 12,738, fol. 565).

of whom he acted as confessor and director. Probably most of these were addressed to the nuns of Beas and Córdoba, rather than to those of Granada and Segovia, where he lived more continuously and therefore had less need to write.

From an early age St. John of the Cross had a genius for the direction of his Carmelite daughters, which St. Teresa, herself so greatly skilled in the knowledge of human nature, observed with great satisfaction. He may be said to have specialized in this particular branch of spiritual work from the age of twenty-nine, or even earlier. The disappearance of almost all the letters that he wrote to his penitents, therefore, is an irreparable loss. It is clear from what we have of them that they are as precious as any fragment of some lost treatise of his would be. Though couched in natural, simple and spontaneous language, they expound the same sublime doctrine of detachment and emptiness of the faculties. They have none of the infinite and marvellous variety of the letters of St. Teresa, none of her wonderful nervous vitality and unaffected, childlike fun. The letters of few men have surpassed those of this unrivalled woman. Yet his epistolary style is not without its merit, or even without its charm. Its prevailing note is seriousness, but not a seriousness that repels. Speaking for ourselves, we find the Saint's letters more than usually attractive.

The maxim-like phrases which are scattered through them are in no way unworthy of his great treatises.

Desolation is a file, and the endurance of darkness is preparation for great light.<sup>1</sup>

The mouth of desire must be opened toward Heaven and must be empty of aught else that might fill it.<sup>2</sup>

Where there is no love, put love and you will find love.<sup>3</sup>

Even so short a selection as this suggests one great characteristic of the Saint—the union, in his life and in his thought, of a singular gentleness with a sobriety and severity of conduct and doctrine that have seldom been equalled. The letters to the Prioress and Discalced nuns of Córdoba and to those spiritual daughters of his who lamented the discredit into which he fell in his last months on earth are full of this twofold quality. Through his stern asceticism we continually catch glimpses of uncreated Beauty.

There are familiar passages, too, in these letters which reveal something of the Saint's personal relations with some of his friends. None

<sup>1</sup> [Letter I.]

<sup>2</sup> [Letter V.]

<sup>3</sup> [Letter XXII.]

has greater charm than that addressed, from Segovia, to Doña Juana de Pedraza, the pious Granada lady, who had reproached him with having forgotten her.<sup>1</sup> It was of the letters of this same lady, with whom he evidently corresponded frequently, that he made the observation, so delightful in its context: 'If they were not so tiny, it would be better.'<sup>2</sup>

Of the twenty-nine extant letters, about one-quarter are fragmentary. It seems improbable that any early collection was made, for in that case more would surely have been preserved. M. Agustina de San José, who had known St. John of the Cross in Granada, related in 1614 how many of his letters to her nuns were given into her keeping and how finally they urged her to burn them during the period of persecution which immediately preceded his death.<sup>3</sup> Similar testimony is borne by P. Jerónimo de San José.<sup>4</sup> Many of the letters, nevertheless, must have survived these years, since various deponents in the processes of beatification and canonization describe themselves as being still in possession of them. 'I had many letters from him,' deposed M. Ana de San Alberto, for example, 'which I esteemed and kept like relics. Since his death I have been giving them to religious who asked me for them out of devotion.'<sup>5</sup> P. Alonso de la Madre de Dios reported having seen many such letters, of which unhappily he did not make copies, though he specifies the recipients of a number of them and mentions the places from which they were written. In particular he speaks of two written by the Saint to his old friend and companion at Duruelo, P. Antonio de Jesús, then Provincial of Andalusia, after he had provisionally fixed upon La Peñuela as the place of his retirement.

Not only had St. John of the Cross no friends like St. Teresa's beloved P. Gracián and María de San José to collect and keep his letters as a labour of love, but little trouble seems to have been taken, in the century after his death, to ensure their preservation. P. Andrés de la Encarnación comments regretfully upon this omission.<sup>6</sup> The first signs of any attention to so important a task are to be found in the *Historia* (1641) of P. Jerónimo de San José, who in his narrative inserts passages from no less than sixteen letters. These have served as bases for successive editions. True, only nine of them found a place in the 1694 edition of the Saint's writings and only in the edition of 1703

<sup>1</sup> [Letter XVIII.]

<sup>2</sup> [Letter IX.]

<sup>3</sup> MS. 8,568, p. 445; *Memorias Historiales*, A. 35.

<sup>4</sup> *Historia*, Bk. VII, chap. v, § 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Memorias Historiales*, C. 9.

<sup>6</sup> MS. 3,180, Adiciones E, Nos. 13, 14. [Sobrino, pp. 112-30, 134-5 (see next note), has compiled a list of thirty lost letters, giving such details as are known about them.]

were they all included. P. Gerardo was the first to increase the number, which he brought up to twenty-five, to which there have since been made only a few additions.<sup>1</sup>

We add several documents, written or signed by the Saint when Vicar-Provincial of Andalusia, some of which have not previously been published. On the other hand, we omit a few formal and conventional documents, in no sense *composed* by the Saint, which P. Gerardo included, as well as a prayer to the Blessed Virgin, once thought to be an autograph MS., but now recognized as being in the somewhat similar hand of a nun. Though the Saint might, of course, have been the author of the prayer, there is no evidence for this whatsoever.

<sup>1</sup> [In his 1929-31 edition, P. Silverio added one letter, and in the 1940 edition (Bibliography, No. 31, below) he included also a fragment recently found in an Italian convent (XXVI of this edition). In 1950, P. José Antonio de Sobrino, S.J., published two more letters (XXIV, XXIX) from a manuscript, discovered at Granada, which was written, about 1630, by a Basilian monk at El Tardón (*C.W.S.T.J.*, III, 82). I am indebted to him for permission to translate these, and also to quote from his *Estudios sobre San Juan de la Cruz y nuevos textos de su obra* (Madrid, 1950), which discusses, not only the *Letters*, but also the *Cautions* (of which it gives a new text) and certain points of interest connected with the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and the *Dark Night of the Soul*.

In the footnotes to the *Letters*, the Tardón-Granada MS. is denoted by the abbreviation TG.]

# LETTERS OF SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

## LETTER I

TO M. CATALINA DE JESÚS

BAEZA, JULY 6, 1581.

*Greets the Mother, for whom the Saint has a particular esteem, and tells her that he does not write at greater length because he does not know where she is.*<sup>1</sup>

Jesus be in your soul, my daughter Catalina. Although I do not know where you are, I want to write you these lines, trusting that our Mother will send them on to you if you are not with her; and, if you are not with her, be comforted with me, for I am in exile farther away still and am alone down here;<sup>2</sup> for since I was swallowed by that whale<sup>3</sup> and cast up in this strange harbour, I have not been found worthy to see you again, nor the saints that are up yonder.<sup>4</sup> God has done all

<sup>1</sup> The original of this letter, according to P. Andrés de la Encarnación, was venerated in the second half of the eighteenth century at the Convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns in Calatayud. There is a copy in the National Library, Madrid, made by P. Alonso el Asturicense (MS. 12,738), which is here followed.

Mother Catalina de Jesús was a native of Valderas, in the province of León, and professed at the Carmelite Convent of Valladolid on December 13, 1572. In 1580, she went to Palencia, where she was living when St. John of the Cross wrote her this letter. When St. Teresa left Ávila, in January 1582, to found a convent in Burgos, she passed through Palencia and took a number of nuns with her to this new house, including M. Catalina. In the first canonical elections of this new Community, held under the presidency of P. Gracián on April 21, 1582, M. Catalina was elected superior by all the votes except her own (cf. *Biblioteca Mística Carmelitana*, Vol. VI, p. 370). Later she left Burgos for Soria, where she died.

It is difficult to discover from M. Catalina's history the origin of her friendship with St. John of the Cross, to which this letter points. She may perhaps have been at Ávila at some time when the Saint was confessor to the Convent of the Incarnation there. This letter seems to indicate that their relations were those of personal friends, and not merely of correspondents.

<sup>2</sup> ['Down here,' i.e. in Andalusia, where, as we know, the Saint was less happy than in his native Castile.]

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to his imprisonment at Toledo.

<sup>4</sup> This Pauline phrase refers to his fellow-religious in Castile. Though he left his Toledan prison in August 1578, he had not had an opportunity in the meantime to see any of them.

things well, for, after all, desolation is a file, and the endurance of darkness is preparation for great light.

God grant that we walk not in darkness. Oh, how many things I should like to say to you! But I am writing in complete darkness, realizing that you may not receive this letter; so I am breaking off without ending it. Commend me to God. I will not say any more about things down here, for I have no desire to do so.

From Baeza, July 6, 1581.

Your servant in Christ,  
FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

(Superscription): For Sister Catalina de Jesús, Discalced Carmelite, wherever she may be.

## LETTER II

TO M. ANA DE SAN ALBERTO, PRIORESS OF CARAVACA

Date uncertain.

(Fragment.)

*Without having been previously informed of it, he tells her of a certain interior affliction that she was suffering, leaving her tranquil.*<sup>1</sup>

How long, daughter, do you suppose that you will be carried in the arms of others? I desire to see in you so great a detachment from the creatures and an independence of them that hell itself would not suffice to trouble you. What are these uncalled-for tears that you are shedding nowadays? How much valuable time do you suppose you have wasted on these scruples? If you would communicate your

<sup>1</sup> This fragment was published by P. Jerónimo de San José in his *History of St. John of the Cross*, Bk. V, chap. v, § 10. It must have been written very shortly after Letter I. P. Jerónimo says of it: 'By means of these words he removed those fears and she very soon experienced the fulfilment of what he had prophesied. She was thinking of looking for a certain person so as to write to him of the favour which Our Lord had granted her herein, when she received a letter from the venerable Father telling her all that had come to pass in her soul.' This fragment and the next (Letter III) can also be found in a statement (MS. 12,738) taken from M. Ana by P. Juan Evangelista, and signed by her. The text of this statement is followed, with regard to both fragments, in the present edition.

Mother Ana de San Alberto, a much-loved and respected friend of both St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, was a native of Malagón, where she took the veil in the convent founded there by St. Teresa in 1568. When in 1575 St. Teresa went through Malagón on her way to found the convent at Seville, she took M. Ana with her as far as Beas. From the Andalusian capital she sent her to found a convent at Caravaca, having great trust in her ability and discretion, and for many years she was Prioress of Caravaca. It was here that she came to know St. John of the Cross who was there on various occasions.

trials to me, go to that spotless mirror of the Eternal Father, which is His Son, for in that mirror I behold your soul daily, and I doubt not but that you will come away from it comforted and will have no need to go begging at the doors of poor people.

## LETTER III

TO M. ANA DE SAN ALBERTO, PRIORESS OF CARAVACA

Date uncertain.

(Fragment.)

*Counsels her to journey to perfection without dependence upon any creature and to cast aside unfounded scruples which do harm to her spirit.*<sup>1</sup>

. . . Since you say nothing to me, I tell you not to be foolish and harbour fears that make the soul cowardly. Give to God that which He has given you and gives you daily. It seems to me that you are trying to measure God by the measure of your own capacity; but you should not do so. Prepare yourself, for God seeks to do you a great favour.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

## LETTER IV

TO M. ANA DE SAN ALBERTO, PRIORESS OF CARAVACA

SEVILLE, JUNE 1586.

*Informs the Mother of the solemnity with which the foundation of Discalced Carmelite friars at Córdoba was inaugurated and describes the transference of the nuns of Seville to their own house. Matters concerning the foundation at Caravaca.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This fragment also was published by P. Jerónimo de San José (*History*, Bk. V, chap. v, § 11), who took it from the statement made by M. Ana, and referred to above (p. 242, n. 1). P. Jerónimo tells us that this letter was written by St. John of the Cross when in Granada, and, since he knew M. Ana at least as early as 1581, when he was at Caravaca for the elections there, it may easily have been written at a date very little later. [P. Sobrino points out that in MS. 12,738, Letters II and III are given in the inverse order, and infers from the context that that order is correct.]

<sup>2</sup> The autograph of this letter was venerated at the Duruelo priory until the time of the secularization of the religious houses in Spain in the nineteenth century. It is mentioned by P. Andrés de la Encarnación (*Memorias Historiales*, I, 60) and by P. Manuel de Santa María. On the expulsion of the religious from Duruelo, this letter was sent to some nuns at Arévalo, who presented it to the *corregidor* of that town in gratitude for his help to them in their troubles. It is now the property of the Marquesa de Reinosa. It measures 31 by 22 cms. and consists of two folios, the upper half of the second of which (cf. p. 245, n. 5, below) is missing. The superscription is on the letter.

On another half-sheet are the words: 'I, Fray Juan de San José, Prior of this house of

Jesus be in your soul. When I left Granada for the foundation at Córdoba, I had written to you in haste. And afterwards, when I was in Córdoba, I received your letters and the letters of those persons who were going to Madrid, and who must have thought that they would catch me at the Council. But you must know that it has never met, as we have been waiting for these visitations and foundations to end, and the Lord hastens matters so much in these days that we are unable to do anything. The friars' foundation at Córdoba was concluded with the greatest acclamation and solemnity throughout the city that has ever been known in connection with any religious Order. For all the clergy of Córdoba and all the confraternities gathered together and the Most Holy Sacrament was taken from the Cathedral with great solemnity: all the streets were beautifully hung and the crowds reminded one of Corpus Christi Day. This was on the Sunday after the Ascension; the Bishop came to preach and praised us very much in his sermon. Our house is in the best part of the city—that is to say, in the parish of the Cathedral.<sup>1</sup>

I am now in Seville for the transference of our nuns, who have bought some excellent houses; they cost almost fourteen thousand ducats but are worth more than twenty thousand.<sup>2</sup>

They are already in them and on St. Barnabas' Day the Cardinal is to place the Most Holy Sacrament there with great solemnity. And I mean to leave another house of friars here before I go, so that there will be two houses of our friars at Seville. And between now and Saint John's Day I go to Ecija, where, with God's help, we shall found another, and then to Málaga, and thence to the Council.<sup>3</sup>

Discalced Carmelite friars of Duruelo, added this sheet of paper which was missing from this letter of our father St. John of the Cross. It seems to have contained the date, which is not in the letter as we have it, but we have the signature of the Saint, and also, at the foot of the letter, three lines in his own handwriting. And as a witness of the truth of this I have signed it in the same house, on the 22nd of August, 1680. *Fray Juan de San José.*

There can be very little missing from the letter as it has come down to us; the missing lines seem to refer to Doña Catalina de Otálora, one of the persons who chiefly contributed to St. Teresa's having founded the Convent of Discalced nuns at Caravaca.

<sup>1</sup> The Carmelites took over the church of San Roque, in the parish of the Cathedral, a central part of the city, on May 18, 1586. St. John of the Cross was at that time Vicar-Provincial of the Discalced in Andalusia.

<sup>2</sup> The Saint had authorized the Discalced nuns of Seville to purchase these houses in a document dated April 12, 1586.

<sup>3</sup> On May 13, 1586, the nuns were transferred from the Calle de la Pajería (now the Calle de Zaragoza) to the house where they still live in the Calle de Santa Teresa, in the parish of Santa Cruz. Neither the second foundation of the Discalced friars in Seville, nor the foundation of Ecija, was carried out at that time. The former, that of El Santo Ángel, dates from 1588; the latter, from 1591. About this time the Saint sickened with a fever in Guadalcazar, so that he could not, as he proposes in the letter, go on to Málaga, where in the preceding year he had founded a Convent of Discalced nuns; there had been

I only wish I had a commission for your foundation as I have for these, and that I were not expecting to have to do so much wandering about. But I hope in God that the foundation will be made and I shall do all that I can in the Council. Tell that to those persons, to whom I am writing.

I have greatly regretted that the contract with the Fathers of the Company has not been drawn up, because, as I see them, they are not people who keep their word; and so I fancy that not only will they deviate partially from it, but they will change their minds altogether if they are so inclined. Note, then, that I advise you, without saying anything, either to them or to anyone else, to discuss with Señor Gonzalo Muñoz<sup>1</sup> the purchase of that other house, which is on the far side, and let the deeds be drawn up, for they can see that they have the whip hand,<sup>2</sup> so they are getting overbearing. And it will very soon be known that we are buying these houses solely in order to make up for our annoyance, and thus they will come to terms without all this breaking of heads, and we shall even make them give us everything we want. Say very little to people about this and do it, for sometimes one cannot take a precaution without at the same time taking another.<sup>3</sup>

I should like you to send me the little book of the *Songs of the Bride*, for Madre de Dios will presumably have copied it by now.<sup>4</sup>

This Council meeting is greatly delayed, and I regret it, because of the entry of Doña Catalina, for I want to give . . .<sup>5</sup>

Your servant,

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

See that you give my special remembrance to Señor Gonzalo a house for friars since 1584. As one of the Discalced Definitors he had to assist at the chapter convoked in Madrid, for August 13, 1586, by P. Nicolás Doria, where, among other matters, that of publishing St. Teresa's writings was considered.

<sup>1</sup> D. Gonzalo Muñoz was one of the leading citizens of Caravaca and very well disposed to the Discalced. On May 5, 1583, we find P. Gracián writing from Almodóvar del Campo to the Prioress of Caravaca, authorizing her to receive two of D. Gonzalo's daughters into the community.

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'that they have got hold of the rope'—a not dissimilar metaphor.]

<sup>3</sup> This is a long and complicated question of which a full explanation cannot be given here. Briefly, there was a house and garden, the property of Sister Isabel de San Pablo, which adjoined a Jesuit College. The Jesuit Fathers claimed to have a right to this house, possibly because of some verbal agreement with Isabel's mother, and actually took possession of it. This led to some feeling between the two communities. The Rector of the College assured the Prioress that they would arrive at a satisfactory agreement, but St. John of the Cross has evidently no great confidence that this will be so and hence warns the Prioress to take every precaution.

<sup>4</sup> The allusion is to the *Spiritual Canticle*, of which a copy was being made by Francisca dela Madre de Dios, who had been professed in her native town of Caravaca on June 1, 1578.

<sup>5</sup> From an inspection of the manuscript, it would seem that some fifteen lines are missing from this letter.

Muñoz. I do not write to him lest I should weary him, and because your Reverence will say to him what I say here.

(Superscription): To M. Ana de San Alberto, Prioress of the Discalced Carmelite nuns at Caravaca.<sup>1</sup>

## LETTER V

### TO THE DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS OF BEAS

MÁLAGA, NOVEMBER 18, 1586.

*Gives the Discalced nuns admirable instruction concerning emptiness and detachment from creatures.*<sup>2</sup>

Jesus be in your souls, my daughters. Are you thinking that, since you see me so silent, I have lost sight of you, and cease from considering how with great ease you may become holy, and how, with great delight and under sure protection, you may go rejoicing in the beloved Spouse? Well, I shall come to you and you will see that I have not been forgetting you, and we shall see what wealth you have gained in pure love and in the paths of eternal life and what excellent progress you are making in Christ, Whose brides are His delight and crown: and a crown deserves not merely to be sent rolling along the floor, but to be taken by the angels and seraphim in their hands and set with reverence and esteem on the head of their Lord.

When the heart is occupied with mean things, the crown rolls along the floor, and each of these mean things gives it, as it were, one kick farther. But when man attains, as David says, to loftiness of heart, then is God magnified with the crown of that lofty heart of His bride, wherewith they crown Him in the day of the joy of His heart,<sup>3</sup> wherein He has His delights when He is with the sons of men. These waters of interior delights have not their source in the earth: the mouth of desire must be opened toward Heaven, and must be empty of aught else that might fill it, so that thus the mouth of desire, neither clogged

<sup>1</sup> This superscription forms part of the autograph manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> The autograph of this letter is found in the parish church of Pastrana, which had it, no doubt, from the former Discalced Carmelite convent at Pastrana. It was first published by D. Mariano Pérez y Cuenca in his *Recuerdos Teresianos de Pastrana* and is of particular value as confirming our knowledge of St. John of the Cross's warm regard for the nuns of Beas. There are a number of early copies extant, notably one in the codex of the *Spiritual Canticle* belonging to the Discalced friars of Segovia.

<sup>3</sup> The Segovian copy reads 'of His coronation' [*coronación for coronación*]. The reference, despite the mention of David, seems to be to Canticles iii, 11.

nor closed by the taste of aught else, may be completely empty and wide open toward Him Who says: 'Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it for thee.'<sup>1</sup>

He, then, that seeks pleasure in aught else keeps not himself empty that God may fill him with His ineffable joy, and, in the state in which he goes to God, even so does he go out from Him, for his hands are encumbered and he cannot take what God gives him. May God deliver us from such evil encumbrances, which impede such sweet and delectable freedom.<sup>2</sup>

Serve God, my beloved daughters in Christ, following His footsteps of mortification in all patience, in all silence and with all desire to suffer. Become the executioners of your own pleasures, mortifying yourselves if perchance there is still aught left in you that has yet to die and that impedes the interior resurrection of the spirit. May that spirit dwell in your souls! Amen.

From Málaga.

Your servant,

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

November 18, 1586.

## LETTER VI

TO THE DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS OF BEAS [OR GRANADA]<sup>3</sup>

GRANADA, NOVEMBER 22, 1587.

*New spiritual instructions for the nuns. What the soul ordinarily needs is not to write and speak but to be silent and act. The best means of preserving one's spirituality is to suffer. Solitude and recollection in God.*<sup>4</sup>

Jesus, Mary, Joseph<sup>5</sup> be in your souls, my daughters in Christ. Your letter comforted me greatly: may Our Lord reward you for it! My not having written has not been for lack of willingness, for truly

<sup>1</sup> [Psalm lxxx, 11; A.V., lxxxi, 10.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'liberties.']

<sup>3</sup> [See p. 249, n. 3, below.]

<sup>4</sup> This letter belonged to the Discalced Carmelite friars of Zaragoza and seems to have disappeared in the siege of that city during the War of Independence. There are two almost identical copies in the National Library, Madrid (MS. 12,738, fol. 767, and MS. 13,245, fol. 247). In the text we follow the latter copy, which was made from an earlier copy, at Duruelo, in 1761, by P. Manuel de Santa María. [There is also an excellent copy in the Tardón-Granada MS., agreeing more closely with MS. 13,245 than with 12,738: this copy is discussed in full by P. Sobrino, pp. 84-92.]

<sup>5</sup> [P. Silverio omits this last word, which is found in MS. 13,245, but not in other copies.]

I desire your great good, but because it seems to me that enough has already been said and written for the accomplishment of what is needful; and that what is lacking (if anything be lacking) is not writing or speaking, for of this there is generally too much, but silence and work. And, apart from this, speaking is a distraction, whereas silence and work bring to the spirit recollection and strength. And therefore, when a person once understands what has been said to him for his profit, he needs neither to hear nor to say more, but rather to practise what has been said to him silently and carefully, in humility and charity and self-contempt, and not to go away and seek new things, which serve only to satisfy the appetite in external matters (and even here are unable to satisfy it) and leave the spirit weak and empty, with no interior virtue. Hence such a one profits neither at the beginning nor at the end. He is as one that eats again before he has digested his last meal, who, because his natural heat is divided between both meals, has no strength to convert this food into substance, and becomes indisposed.

It is very needful, my daughters, to be able to withdraw the spirit from the devil and from sensuality,<sup>1</sup> for otherwise, without knowing it, we shall find ourselves completely failing to make progress and very far removed from the virtues of Christ, and afterwards we shall awaken, and find our work and labour inside out. Thinking that our lamp was burning, we shall find it apparently extinguished, for when we blew upon it, and thought thereby to fan its flame, we may rather have put it out. I say, then, that, if this is not to be, and in order to preserve our spirituality (as I have said) there is no other way<sup>2</sup> than to suffer and work and be silent, and to close the senses by the practice of solitude and the inclination to solitude, and forgetfulness of all creatures and all happenings, even though the world perish. Never, for good or for evil, fail to quiet your hearts<sup>3</sup> with tender love,<sup>4</sup> in order that you may suffer in all things that present themselves. For perfection is of such great moment, and spiritual delight is of so rich a price—may God grant that all this may suffice; for it is impossible to continue to make progress save by working and suffering with all virtue, and being completely enwrapped in silence.

<sup>1</sup> MS. 12,738: 'from our sensuality.'

<sup>2</sup> [*No hay medio*. Thus the text of MS. 13,245. P. Silverio, following a marginal note, reads: *No hay mejor remedio*: 'there is no better remedy.' The other copies also have this.]

<sup>3</sup> MS. 12,738: 'allow your hearts to become disquieted.'

<sup>4</sup> [*Zit.*, 'with the bowels of love.']

I have understood,<sup>1</sup> daughters, that the soul which is easily inclined to talk and converse is but very little inclined towards God; for, when it is inclined toward God, it is at once, as it were, forcibly drawn within itself, that it may be silent and shun all conversation, for God would have the soul enjoy Him more than it enjoys any creature, howsoever excellent and suitable such a creature may be.

I commend myself to the prayers of your Charities; and be certain that, small as my charity is, it is so completely centred in you that I never forget those to whom I owe so much in the Lord. May He be with us all. Amen.

From Granada, on the 22nd of November, 1587.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

The greatest necessity we have is to be silent before this great God with the desire<sup>2</sup> and with the tongue, for the language which He alone hears is the language of silent love.

(Superscription): To Ana de Jesús and the other Discalced Carmelite sisters of the Convent of Granada.<sup>3</sup>

## LETTER VII

TO M. LEONOR BAUTISTA, BEAS

GRANADA, FEBRUARY 8, 1588.

*Commiserates with her on her trials and counsels her to bear them with pleasure, for God's sake.*<sup>4</sup>

Jesus be in your Reverence. Think not, daughter in Christ, that I

<sup>1</sup> MS. 12,738: 'I understand.'

<sup>2</sup> MS. 12,738: 'with the spirit.'

<sup>3</sup> [MS. 13,245, from which this superscription is taken, clearly says 'Granada,' and, though it might seem strange that St. John of the Cross should write so long a letter to nuns in the same city, it would not be difficult to find reasons for this. The difficulty resides in the fact that Ana de Jesús, who is mentioned by name, and who had gone from Beas to Granada as Prioress in 1582, left Granada, and went to Madrid as Prioress, in 1586, holding that office for three years. This is pointed out by P. Manuel de Santa María in a manuscript marginal note in MS. 13,245, and is, in any case, a well-known fact. P. Silverio, in the edition here translated, reads 'Granada,' but in his 1940 edition, without giving any reason, he substitutes 'Beas,' presumably in order to resolve the contradiction between superscription and heading. In the heading, 'Beas' occurs in several copies (TG, e.g., begins: 'Letter which the holy father Fray John of the Cross . . . sent to the nuns of his Order in the town of Beas'), but this is even less likely to have been correct than 'Granada.')

<sup>4</sup> The autograph, in a good state of preservation, is venerated in the Convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns of Barcelona. It measures 31 by 23 cm. and is written on one side only. There is a photographic reproduction in P. Gerardo's *Autógrafos*.

The nun to whom the letter was written was born at Alcaraz, in the province of Albacete, and professed at Beas in 1578. She had just laid down her office as prioress; it is to this that the Saint alludes in the last sentence of the second paragraph.

have ceased to grieve for you in your trials or for those that share them with you; yet, when I remember that God has called you to lead an apostolic life, which is a life of contempt, and is leading you by that road, I am comforted. Briefly, God desires that the religious shall live the religious life in such a way that he shall have done with everything, and everything shall be as nothing to him. For He Himself desires to be the only wealth of the soul and its comfort and its delectable glory. A surpassing favour has God granted your Reverence, for now, forgetting all things, your Reverence will be able to rejoice in God alone, and for love of God will care nothing as to what they do with you, since you belong not to yourself but to God.

Let me know if your departure for Madrid is certain, and if the Mother Prioress is coming, and commend me greatly to my daughters Magdalena and Ana,<sup>1</sup> and to them all, for I have no opportunity to write to them.

From Granada, on the 8th of February, (15)88.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

## LETTER VIII

TO P. AMBROSIO MARIANO DE SAN BENITO,  
PRIOR OF MADRID

SEGOVIA, NOVEMBER 9, 1588.

*Changes of convent by certain religious. The Prior and Sub-prior must get on well together. Nobody must interfere with the novices.*<sup>2</sup>

Jesus be in your Reverence. The need for religious, as your Reverence knows, is very great, on account of the large number of existing foundations. Therefore your Reverence must have patience until Fray Miguel leaves you to await the Father Provincial at Pastrana, for he has then to go and complete the foundation of that convent at Molina.<sup>3</sup> The Fathers also thought it would be well to give your

<sup>1</sup> These were two of the nuns of Beas, both of whom are mentioned elsewhere in these volumes.

<sup>2</sup> The autograph, well preserved, is in the possession of the Discalced Carmelite nuns of St. Joseph's, Ávila. On P. Ambrosio Mariano, one of the Discalced friars most greatly esteemed by St. Teresa, see her *Foundations*, Chap. xvii [*C.W.S.T.J.*, III, 81-4].

<sup>3</sup> This foundation did not prove a success. The friar here mentioned was P. Miguel de Jesús, Sub-prior of Madrid.

Reverence a sub-prior; and so they have given you Fray Ángel,<sup>1</sup> as they think he will get on well with his prior, which is the most necessary thing in a convent. Will your Reverence then give to each of these his letters patent? It will also be well if your Reverence loses no opportunity of seeing that none, be he priest or no, meddles with the novices in his dealings with them; for, as your Reverence knows, there is nothing more harmful than to pass through many hands and for others to go about interfering with the novices. It is right to help and relieve Fray Ángel, since he has so many novices, and also to give him the authority which belongs to a sub-prior, as we have done, so that he may be the more respected in the house. As to Fray Miguel, it seems that there is no great need for him to be here just now, and that he will be able to serve the Order better elsewhere. With regard to Father Gracián, nothing new has happened, save that Fray Antonio is now here.<sup>2</sup>

From Segovia, November 9, (15)88.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.<sup>3</sup>

## LETTER IX

TO DOÑA JUANA DE PEDRAZA, GRANADA

SEGOVIA, JANUARY 28, 1589.

*The Saint acknowledges the letters which his spiritual daughter, Doña Ana, has written him. Spiritual counsels: detachment from everything and blind obedience to the spiritual director. It is fitting that we should never be without our cross. He begs her not to write such tiny letters.<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Ángel de San Gubriel.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the troubles of P. Gracián [described briefly in *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, Vol. II, pp. 152-9] with his Order. Both St. John of the Cross and P. Mariano were well disposed to him. Fray Antonio (i.e. de Jesús), as a member of the Consulta (S.S.M., II, p. 156) which now governed the Reform, was obliged by disposition of the Consulta to reside in Segovia, the only exception to be made being that of P. Mariano himself, who was to retain the priorate at Madrid.

<sup>3</sup> After the signature is written, in another hand: 'P. Gregorio de San Angelo kisses your Reverence's hands.'

<sup>4</sup> The autograph is in the Convent of Discalced Carmelite friars at Concesa, in Italy. A photographic reproduction was published by P. Anastasio de San José in his *Somma di Mistica Teologia*. Owing to the letter having been long folded, several words are no longer legible.

Doña Juana de Pedraza was a disciple of the Saint and may well have been sister of the then Archdeacon of Granada. [Cf. p. 266, n. 2.]

Jesus be in your soul. A few days ago I wrote to you by way of Fray Juan,<sup>1</sup> replying to this your last letter, which, as was to be expected, was greatly valued. In that letter I said that, as far as I can see, I have received all your letters, and have sympathized with your griefs and troubles and times of loneliness, which, even when you have said nothing about them, have always cried out to me to such an extent that even with your pen you could not have said more. All these things are rappings and knockings upon the soul, calling it to greater love, and causing more prayer and sighings of the spirit to God; that He may fulfil that for which the soul begs for His sake. I told you that there was no cause to enter that . . .<sup>2</sup> but that you must do what you are commanded, and, if you are hindered from doing this, be obedient and tell me about it, and God will provide what is best. God takes care of the affairs of those who love Him truly without their being anxious concerning them.

In matters pertaining to the soul, it is best for you, so as to be on the safe side, to have attachment to nothing and desire for nothing, and to have true and complete attachment and desire for him who is your proper guide, for to do otherwise would be not to desire a guide. And when one guide suffices, and you have one who suits you, all others are either superfluous or harmful. Let your soul cling to nothing; and, if you fail not to pray, God will take care of your affairs, for they belong to no other master than God, nor can they do so. This I find to be true of myself, for, the more things are mine, the more I have my heart and soul in them and the more anxious I am about them; for he that loves becomes one with the object of his love, as does God with him that loves Him. Hence one cannot forget this without forgetting one's own soul; and for the object of one's love one indeed forgets one's own soul, for one lives more in the object of one's love than in oneself.

O great God of love, and Lord, how much of Thine own riches dost Thou not set in him that loves naught and takes pleasure in naught but Thyself, since Thou givest Thyself to him and makest him one thing with Thyself through love! And herein Thou givest him to love and have pleasure in that which the soul most desires in Thee and that which brings it the greatest profit. For we must not be without our cross, even as our Beloved had His cross until He died the death of love. He orders our sufferings in the love of that which we most need, so that we may make the greater sacrifices and be of the greater worth.

<sup>1</sup> P. Juan Evangelista.

<sup>2</sup> Several words which follow are illegible.

But it is all short, for it continues only until the knife is raised, and then Isaac remains alive, with the promise that his children shall be multiplied.

Patience is needful, my daughter, in this poverty, for patience enables us to leave our country,<sup>1</sup> and to enter into life to have full fruition of it all, which is . . . of life.<sup>2</sup>

Now I know not when I shall go. I am well, although my soul lags far behind. Commend me to God and give the letters to Fray Juan,<sup>3</sup> or to the nuns, more often, whenever you can, and if they were not so tiny, it would be better.

From Segovia, on January 28, 1589.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

## LETTER X

TO A GIRL FROM THE PROVINCE OF ÁVILA WHO WISHED TO  
BECOME A DISCALCED NUN

SEGOVIA, FEBRUARY.

*He replies to her, telling her how to behave with respect to her sins, to the Passion of the Lord and to everlasting glory.*<sup>4</sup>

Jesus be in your soul. The messenger came upon<sup>5</sup> me at a time when I could not reply before he went on his way, and now at this moment he is waiting again. May God ever give you His holy grace, my daughter, so that at all times it may all be employed in His holy love,<sup>6</sup> as is your obligation, for it was for this alone that He created you and

<sup>1</sup> [The original adds 'well.']

<sup>2</sup> Here several words are illegible.

<sup>3</sup> P. Juan Évanglista.

<sup>4</sup> This letter was published by P. Jerónimo de San José (*History*, Bk. VI, chap. vii, § 3), who says: 'It was written to a girl from Madrid who wished to be a Discalced nun, and later entered a convent of the Order founded at a place in New Castile called Arenas, which was afterwards transferred to Guadalajara. She was a native of Narros del Castillo, a village in the diocese of Ávila. The venerable Father used to give her Communion when he was confessor at the Incarnation, and she was in the house of Doña Guiomar de Ulloa, in Ávila, and later he was in the habit of writing to her. Out of respect and devotion to him, and as his spiritual daughter, she took the name of Ana de la Cruz.'

The original of the greater part of this letter was formerly to be seen at the Convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns at Alcalá. It was published by D. Vicente de la Fuente in one of the series of autograph letters which he began to edit, and was reproduced in *El Monte Carmelo* in November 1916. It is now no longer to be found in this convent, however, and the nuns seem to have no idea of the manner of its disappearance or of its whereabouts. P. Jerónimo's version is used for the first three sentences and the last three paragraphs. [P. Sobrino suggests the substitution of two emendations from MS. 12,738, which are given in notes below.]

<sup>5</sup> [*Me ha topado*. MS. 12,738 reads *me ha tomado*, 'took (i.e. caught) me,' which sounds rather the more natural of the two.]

<sup>6</sup> [MS. 12,738 adds: 'and service.']

redeemed you.<sup>1</sup> On the three points about which you write to me there would be a great deal to say, more than the present lack of time and the limitations of this letter allow; but I will write to you of three others, so that you may be able to derive a certain amount of profit from them.

With regard to sins, which God so much abhors that they led Him to suffer death, it is well that, in order duly to mourn for them and not to fall into them, you have as few dealings as you can with other people, and shun them, and never say more than is necessary upon any subject; it would be well if you never had any more to do with them than is strictly necessary and reasonable, however holy they may be; and in this way you will keep the law of God with great punctiliousness and love.

With regard to the Passion of the Lord, strive to chasten your body with discretion, abhor and mortify yourself, and desire not to do your own will and pleasure in aught, for this was the cause of His death and passion; and whatever you do, let it all be by the advice of your mother.<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, with regard to glory: in order to think of it often and to love it, account all the riches of the world and the delights thereof to be mud and vanity and weariness, as indeed they are, and prize naught soever, however great and precious it be, save being right with God, since all that is best here below, compared with those eternal blessings for which we are created, is vile and bitter, and, although its bitterness and vileness be brief, it will abide for ever in the heart of him that prizes them.<sup>3</sup>

I am not forgetting your affairs, but it is impossible to write more now, though I should very much like to do so. Commend them often to God and take Our Lady and Saint Joseph for your advocates in the matter.

I commend myself earnestly to your mother. Ask her to regard this letter as written to her also, and commend me, both of you, to God, and, of your charity, beg your friends to do the same.

God give you His Spirit.

From Segovia, February.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

<sup>1</sup> [After this word the Alcalá autograph begins.]

<sup>2</sup> Earlier editions read: 'of your master.' The mother of this girl, however, it would appear, was very devout.

<sup>3</sup> Here the Alcalá autograph ends. The signature below it is that of another autograph document pasted on the paper.

## LETTER XI

## TO A RELIGIOUS, HIS PENITENT

SEGOVIA, APRIL 14.

*Gives him very useful counsels for progress in virtue. Persuades him to set his will upon God and withdraw all his joy from the creatures.*<sup>1</sup>

The peace of Jesus Christ, son, be ever in your soul. I received your Reverence's letter, in which you tell me of the great desires that Our Lord gives you to occupy your will with Him alone, and to love Him above all things, and in which you ask me to give you a few directions as to how you may achieve this.

I rejoice that God has given you such holy desires and I shall rejoice much more at your putting them into execution. To this end you should notice that all pleasures, joys and affections are ever caused in the soul by the will and desire for things which appear to you good, fitting and delectable, since the soul considers these to be pleasing and precious; and in this way the desires<sup>2</sup> of the will are drawn to them, and it hopes for them, and rejoices in them when it has them, and fears to lose them; and thus, through its affections for things and rejoicing in them, the soul becomes perturbed and unquiet.

So, in order to annihilate and mortify these affections for pleasures with respect to all that is not God, your Reverence must note that all that wherein the will can have a distinct joy is that which is sweet and delectable, since this appears pleasant to it, and no sweet and delectable thing wherein it can rejoice and delight is God, for, as God cannot come within the apprehensions of the other faculties, so neither can He come within the desires and pleasures of the will; for in this life, even as the soul cannot taste of God essentially, so none of the sweetness and delight that it tastes, howsoever sublime it be, can be God; for,

<sup>1</sup> This letter is found in P. Jerónimo de San José's *History*, etc. [Bk. VI, chap. vii, § 2]. There are also extensive fragments of it in the Pamplona Codex [cf. Vol. I, p. 7 of this translation] and in another very early manuscript which was to be found at Duruelo and which P. Andrés copied for the Codex of Alcaudete [Vol. I, pp. 7-8]; the relation between the subject-matter of the letter and that of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* is of course a very close one. [Cf. Vol. I, p. 314, n. 2, and the bracketed note to the 2nd edition of this translation.] There are many variants between these Codices and P. Jerónimo's version of the letter, nor do the Codices agree verbally between themselves. The year in which the letter was written is uncertain; it may well be 1589, when the Saint, we know, was in Segovia.

<sup>2</sup> [The noun translated 'desire' here and below, to the end of the letter, is *apetito*, and the verb *apetecer*; earlier in the letter the words used are *deseo* and *querer*.]

further, all that the will can have pleasure in and desire as a distinct thing, it desires in so far as it knows it to be such or such an object. Then, since the will has never tasted God as He is, neither has known Him beneath any apprehension of the desire, and consequently knows not what God is like, it cannot know what it is like to taste Him, nor can its being and desire and experience attain to the knowledge of the desire for God, since He is above all its capacity.

And thus it is clear that no distinct object from among all objects that the will can enjoy is God. Wherefore, in order to become united with Him, a man must empty and strip himself of every inordinate affection of desire and pleasure for all that can be distinctly enjoyed, whether it be high or low, temporal or spiritual, to the end that the soul may be purged and clean from all inordinate desires, joys and pleasures whatsoever and may thus be wholly occupied, with all its affections, in loving God. For, if in any wise the will can comprehend God and become united with Him, it is by no apprehensible means of the desire, but by love; and, as neither delight nor sweetness nor any pleasure that can pertain to the will is love, it follows that none of these delectable feelings can be a proportionate means whereby the will may unite itself with God, but only the operation of the will, for the operation of the will is very different from its feeling; it is through the operation that it becomes united with God, and has its end in Him, Who is love, and not through the feeling and apprehension of its desire, which makes its home in the soul as its end and object. The feelings can only serve as motives for love if the will desires to pass beyond them, and not otherwise; and thus delectable feelings do not of themselves lead the soul to God, but cause it to rest in themselves; but in the operation of the will, which is to love God, the soul sets on Him alone its affection, joy, pleasure, contentment and love, leaving all things behind and loving Him above them all.

Wherefore, if any man be moved to love God otherwise than by the sweetness which he feels, he is already leaving this sweetness behind him and setting his love on God, Whom he feels not; for, if he set it upon the sweetness and pleasure that he feels, dwelling upon this and resting in it, this would be to set it upon creatures or things pertaining thereto and to turn the motive into the object and the end; and consequently the act of the will would become harmful; for, as God is incomprehensible and inaccessible, the will, in order to direct its act of love toward God, has not to set it upon that which it can touch and apprehend with the desire, but upon that which it cannot

comprehend or attain thereby. And in this way the will remains loving that which is certain, in very truth, by the light of faith, being empty and in darkness, with respect to its feelings, and transcending above all that it can feel with the understanding, and with its own intelligence, believing and loving beyond all that it can understand.

And thus he would be very ignorant who should think that, because spiritual delight and sweetness are failing him, God is failing him, and should rejoice and be glad if he should have them, and think that for this reason he has been having God. And still more ignorant would he be if he went after God in search of this sweetness, and rejoiced and rested in it; for in this case he would not be seeking God with his will grounded in the emptiness of faith and charity, but spiritual sweetness and pleasure, which is of creature, following his taste and desire; and thus he would not then love God purely, above all things (which means to set the whole strength of the will upon Him), for, if he seizes hold upon that creature and clings to it with the desire, his will rises not above it to God, Who is inaccessible; for it is impossible that the will can rise to the sweetness and delight of Divine union, or embrace God, or experience His sweet and loving embraces, save in detachment and emptying of the desire with respect to every particular pleasure whether from above or from below; for it is this that David meant when he said: *Dilata os tuum, et implebo illud*.<sup>1</sup>

It must be known, then, that the desire is the mouth of the will, which opens wide when it is not impeded or filled with any morsel—that is, with any pleasure; for, when the desire is set upon anything, it becomes constrained, and apart from God everything is constraint. And therefore, in order for the soul to succeed in reaching God and to become united with Him, it must have the mouth of its will opened to God alone, and freed from any morsel of desire, to the end that God may satisfy it and fill it with His love and sweetness, and it may still have that hunger and thirst for God alone and refuse to be satisfied with aught else, since here on earth it cannot taste God as He is; and furthermore, that which it can taste, if it so desire, as I say, impedes it. This was taught by Isaias when he said: ‘All you that thirst, come to the waters,’ etc.<sup>2</sup> Here he invites those that thirst for God alone to the fullness of the Divine waters of union with God, though they have no money—that is, no desire.

<sup>1</sup> [‘Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.’] Psalm lxxx, 11 [A.V., lxxxi, 10].

<sup>2</sup> Isaias lv, 1.

Very meet is it, then, if your Reverence would enjoy great peace in your soul and achieve perfection, that you should surrender your whole will to God, so that it may thus be united with Him, and that you should not employ it in the vile and base things of earth.

May His Majesty make you as spiritual and holy as I desire.

From Segovia, on the 14th of April.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

## LETTER XII

TO M. MARÍA DE JESÚS, PRIORESS OF CÓRDOBA

SEGOVIA, JUNE 1589.

*Replies to various questions concerning the observance of the Rule on which she had consulted him.*<sup>1</sup>

Jesus be in your Reverence and make you as holy and poor in spirit as you desire and as His Majesty will grant me for you.

Here is the licence for the four novices; see that they are good for God's service.

I will now reply briefly (for I have little time) to all your questions, having spoken of them first with these Fathers, for our own is not here, as he is travelling. May God bring him back!<sup>2</sup>

1. The discipline with rods is now no longer given even though the rite be ferial, for this expired with the Carmelite rite, which was only at certain times and had few ferias.

2. Secondly, do not as a rule give leave to all the nuns, or to any of them, to take the discipline thrice weekly, in compensation for this or any other penance, and do not, in particular cases, depart from the ordinary routine. You will see what it is best to do in the matter. Keep to the usual practice.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The autograph is in the convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns at Brussels. This is the first time that it has been published in an edition of St. John of the Cross's works. It has no superscription, but it is practically certain that it was written to M. María de Jesús, who, having recently been appointed Prioress of the new community, consulted the Saint on several points of government.

<sup>2</sup> The Saint means that, before answering his correspondent's questions, he had discussed them with the members of the Consulta, of which he was temporarily Superior, P. Doria ['our own (Father)'] having left for his canonical visit to the convents of Andalusia.

<sup>3</sup> An interesting summary of the Carmelite rite can be read in Fr. Zimmerman's *Ordinaire de l'Ordre de Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel*, pp. v-xxiii. St. Teresa's Reform adopted the Latin rite in 1586. The discipline mentioned is only used at present occasionally during Lent and on canonical visits. It may be added that one of the observances of

3. Let them—that is, the community—not ordinarily rise earlier than the constitution orders.

4. The licences expire when the term of the prelate expires, and therefore with this letter I send you a new licence which will allow the entrance into the convent, in case of need, of confessor, physician, barber and workmen.

5. Fifthly, as you have now plenty of vacant places, when what you say is necessary, we can treat of the question of Sister Aldonza. Commend me to her and commend me to God. And abide with Him, for I cannot write at greater length.

From Segovia, June 7, 1589.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.<sup>1</sup>

### LETTER XIII

TO M. LEONOR DE SAN GABRIEL, CÓRDOBA<sup>2</sup>

SEGOVIA, JULY 8, 1589.

*Gives her very wholesome instruction from which to extract much spiritual advantage on her leaving the Discalced Carmelites at Seville for the convent which had just been founded at Córdoba.*<sup>3</sup>

Jesus be in your soul, my daughter in Christ. I thank you for your letter and I thank God that He has been pleased to use you in this foundation of yours, for His Majesty has done this in order that He may use you still more; for, the more He is pleased to give, the more He makes us to desire, until He leaves us empty in order to fill us with good things. You will be well recompensed for the good things in Seville that you are now forgoing for the love of the sisters, for, the Calced which St. Teresa lightened was that of the discipline, which according to her Constitution may only be taken on Fridays, whereas the Calced nuns took it thrice weekly throughout the year.

<sup>1</sup> In a very early hand, that of a woman, is written, beneath this signature: 'This letter is all in the handwriting of our venerable father Fray John of the Cross. Do not give it away, for it is a great relic.' These words are followed by others, now indecipherable.

<sup>2</sup> [The Córdoba convent having been founded ten days before this letter was even written (see n. 3, below), it must clearly have been sent there, and not, as P. Silverio has it, to Seville. MS. 12,738 reproduces the superscription thus: 'To M. Leonor de San Gabriel, Discalced Carmelite, at Córdoba.' Cf. Sobrino, pp. 95-6.]

<sup>3</sup> From P. Jerónimo de San José: *History*, etc., Bk. VI, chap. vii, § 4. Leonor de San Gabriel was a native of Ciudad Real, who had been professed at Malagón in 1571. St. Teresa took her with her, when she passed through Malagón on her way to found the convent at Seville. She became a great favourite of St. Teresa, who calls her 'an angel for her simplicity' and often refers to her in her letters. Cf. particularly Letter 304 [*Letters*, London, 1951, p. 712]. The new foundation at Córdoba, to which M. Leonor went from Seville as Sub-prioress, was made on June 28, 1589.

inasmuch as there is no room for the boundless gifts of God save in a heart that is empty and solitary, and they enter none but such a heart, therefore the Lord, Who loves you greatly, loves you to be quite alone, desiring to be Himself your only companion. And your Reverence will need to set your mind on being contented with Him alone, that you may find all content in Him; for, although the soul be in Heaven, yet, if the will be not prepared to desire it, the soul will not be content; and this is how it is with God (although God is ever with us) if we have our heart affectioned to aught else, and not to Him alone.

I am quite sure that the nuns of Seville will feel lonely there without your Reverence; but perchance your Reverence had already done all that was possible there and it pleases God that you should be used elsewhere, for this new foundation will be an important one; and thus let your Reverence seek to be of great help to the Mother Prioress, and show great conformity and love in everything; although I know quite well that I need not charge you thus, as you have sufficient seniority and experience to know already what usually happens in these foundations; for which reason we have chosen your Reverence; for, as for nuns, there were so many here that there is no room for them.

Give Sister María de la Visitación<sup>1</sup> my particular regards and tell Sister Juana de San Gabriel<sup>2</sup> that I thank her for her message. May God give your Reverence His Spirit.

From Segovia, July 8, 1589.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

## LETTER XIV

TO M. LEONOR DE SAN GABRIEL, CÓRDOBA

MADRID, JULY —.

*Comforts her in a trial that came to her and tortured her greatly.*<sup>3</sup>

Jesus be in your soul, my daughter in Christ. Your letter filled me with sympathy for you in your trouble and I grieve that you have it

<sup>1</sup> This nun, a native of Alcalá de Henares, went with M. Leonor from the Sevillian convent to that of Córdoba.

<sup>2</sup> This was one of the Beas nuns who was sent to the new foundation at Córdoba.

<sup>3</sup> The autograph is to be seen, together with a letter of St. Teresa, in the convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns at Sanlúcar la Mayor. Unfortunately its corners have been cut in order to fit the letter into its oval reliquary and several parts (indicated in the text by dots) are missing. No copy of the complete letter is known.

because of the harm that it may cause your spirit and even your bodily health. But I must tell you that I do not think you have any great reason to feel this trouble as you are doing, since I do not . . . to our Father . . . with no kind of misfortune . . . remembrance of such . . . and even if there were . . . it will be . . . your repentance; and if there were still any (trouble) . . . I . . . given . . . to speak well.<sup>1</sup> Do not be troubled about it, and take no notice of it, for you have no need to do so. For I am certain that it is a temptation which the devil brings to the spirit so that it may occupy in it that which should be occupied in God. Have courage, my daughter, and be given greatly to prayer, forgetting this and that, for after all we have no other blessing nor . . . support, nor comfort (than?) this, and after we have left all for God it is right that we should have no support or comfort in aught save Him. And yet it is a great . . . for us to have Him, so that He may (stay?) with us and that He may give nothing . . . for the soul that . . . comfort and thinking that . . . His Majesty will be . . . when we are not in trouble, for . . . is not . . . I will do it.

From Madrid, July . . .

## LETTER XV

TÓ M. MARIA DE JESÚS, prioress of the Discalced Nuns of  
CÓRDOBA

SEGOVIA, JULY 18, 1589.

*Gives admirable instruction with respect to poverty, which there is so much opportunity to practise, principally in new foundations. What nuns must be like whom God chooses as the first stones of a foundation.*<sup>2</sup>

Jesus be in your soul. You<sup>3</sup> are obliged to make return to the Lord for the cordiality with which they have received you in Córdoba, the

<sup>1</sup> The general meaning of this phrase seems to be that M. Leonor, who was of a very kindly disposition, is afraid that P. Nicolás Doria, with whom she had had a great deal to do in Seville, has been offended with her, and the Saint is reassuring her and offering to intercede with him if necessary.

<sup>2</sup> The original of this letter is venerated in the convent of the Discalced Carmelite nuns at Córdoba and is in excellent preservation. It measures 32 by 22 cm. It was reproduced photographically by P. Gerardo in his *Autógrafos*. P. Jerónimo published the letter in his *History*, etc., Bk. VI, chap. vii.

M. María de Jesús, together with her sister Catalina de Jesús, founded the Convent of the Discalced at Beas. St. Teresa's eulogy of her in chap. xxiii of the *Foundations* should be read together with this letter.

<sup>3</sup> [This 'you' is plural throughout the first two paragraphs.]

account of which I have been greatly cheered to read. And that you should have gone into such poor houses and in such great heat has been the ordinance of God, that you may give cause for edification and show forth what you profess, which is to follow Christ in detachment, in order that they that are moved to join you may know in what spirit they must come.

Herewith I send you the whole of the licences; at first you must look carefully at all whom you receive, because the rest will be formed according to their standard. And see that you keep the spirit of poverty and contempt for everything (otherwise you know that you will fall into a thousand spiritual and temporal necessities), desiring to content yourselves with God alone. And know that you will have, and be conscious of, no necessities other than those to which you desire to subject your hearts; for he that is poor in spirit is the more constant and joyful in privation, since he has made nothing and nothingness his all, and thus finds breadth of heart in everything. Blessed is that nothingness and blessed is that secret place of the heart that is of such great price that it possesses everything, yet desires to possess nothing for itself and casts away all care so long as it can burn the more in love.

Greet all the sisters from me in the Lord and tell them that, as Our Lord has taken them for His foundation-stones, they must consider what manner of stones they ought to be, since others will be built up upon those that are strongest; let them profit by this first outpouring of His Spirit that God gives in these beginnings, that they may make an entirely fresh start upon the road of perfection, in all humility and detachment, both within and without, not in a childish spirit, but with a robust will; let them practise mortification and penance, desiring that this Christ should cost them something, and not being like those who seek their own convenience and comfort, whether in God or apart from Him; but rather let them suffer, both in God, and apart from Him, for His sake, in silence and hope and loving remembrance. Say this to Gabriela<sup>1</sup> and to her sisters from Málaga.<sup>2</sup> To the others I am writing. May God give you His Spirit. Amen.

From Segovia, July 18, 1589.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

Fray Antonio and the Fathers commend themselves to you. Give my greetings to the Father Prior of Guadalcázar.

<sup>1</sup> The MS. has 'Grabiela.' [The metathesis is frequent, occurring for example in the letters of St. Teresa, where she speaks of 'la su Grabiela'—i.e. M. Leonor de San Gabriel.]

<sup>2</sup> M. Leonor de San Gabriel and her companions from Malagón are meant.

## LETTER XVI

TO M. MAGDALENA DEL ESPÍRITU SANTO, CÓRDOBA

SEGOVIA, JULY 28, 1589.

*Encourages her to endure the trials of the new foundation gladly. 'In these beginnings God wants no slothful souls.'*<sup>1</sup>

Jesus be in your soul, my daughter in Christ. I am delighted to see your good resolutions which you set down in your letter. I praise God, Who provides for all things, for there will be ample need of all these resolutions in the beginnings of these foundations, on account of the heat, the straits, the poverty and the labour that there will be throughout, and none must perceive if these things afflict you or no. Take note that in these beginnings God wants no slothful or delicate souls, still less souls that are lovers of themselves; and therefore His Majesty aids souls more in these beginnings, so that with a little diligence they can go forward in all virtue; and it has been a great blessing and a mark of God's favour that He has passed over others and led you to this place. And, even if that which you leave had cost you more, it is nothing, for in any case you would have had to leave it soon; and, to have God in everything, a soul must have nothing in everything; for how can the heart which belongs to one belong in any degree to another?

To Sister Juana<sup>2</sup> I say the same. Let her commend me to God and may He be in your soul. Amen.

From Segovia, July 28, 1589.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

## LETTER XVII

TO P. NICOLÁS DE JESÚS MARÍA (DORIA), VICAR-GENERAL OF THE DISCALCED

SEGOVIA, SEPTEMBER 21, 1589.

*Replies, in the name of the Consulta, to various questions which P. Nicolás, who was absent from Segovia, had put to him.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Published by P. Jerónimo de San José (*History*, Bk. VI, chap. vii, § 5) and in M. Magdalena's own account of the life of the Saint, who was her only director, from the time he first knew her at Beas (1578) until his death thirteen years later.

<sup>2</sup> Juana de San Gabriel, a nun who went from Beas to Córdoba with M. Magdalena.

<sup>3</sup> A copy of this letter occurs in MS. 12,738, p. 759, together with the note: 'This letter

Jesus, Mary be with your Reverence. We were delighted to hear that your Reverence had arrived safely and that everything is going so well with you and with the Nuncio. I hope in God that He will care for His family; here the poor creatures are well and happy; I shall try to get the work done quickly as your Reverence has commanded, although so far the . . .<sup>1</sup> have not arrived.

With regard to receiving persons in Genoa<sup>2</sup> who know no grammar, the Fathers say that it matters little that they should not know it, if they understand Latin with the sufficiency ordered by the Council, so that they know how to construe; and, if they are ordained in Italy with no more than this, it seems that they can be received. But, if the Ordinaries in Italy are not content with that, it seems that they have not the sufficiency ordered by the Council, and it would be troublesome to have to bring them over here to ordain them or teach them. And actually they would not wish many Italians to come over here.

The letters will go to Fray Nicolás, as your Reverence says. May Our Lord preserve you for us as He sees we have need of you.

From Segovia, September 21, (15)89.<sup>3</sup>

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

was faithfully and truly copied in Valladolid by Fray Antonio de la Madre de Dios, of the convent of Burgos, from one that was written by our father Fray John of the Cross.

For the proper understanding of the letter and others which follow, it is essential to know something of the history of P. Nicolás Doria and of the creation of the Consulta (cf. *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, Vol. II, p. 156). The Consulta was created at the Chapter which met in Madrid on June 19, 1588. After six weeks, on the proposal of St. John of the Cross, its headquarters were transferred to Segovia. P. Mariano, however, for special reasons, continued to hold his office of Prior of the Convent at Madrid. The Consulta was moved to Segovia on August 10, 1588, and, on September 16, P. Nicolás left Segovia to visit some of the newly divided provinces of the Reform, leaving the Saint as first definitor, as president of the Consulta and as superior of the house at Segovia in his absence.

<sup>1</sup> [The word omitted is *avenidas*, conjectured by P. Silverio to be an error for *avenidos*, which is the same word as that translated above as 'happy' (*bien avenidos*: well satisfied, agreed). Its use at all here would seem to be another error: some other word must be meant.]

<sup>2</sup> P. Doria had founded the first Italian Discalced convent at Genoa in 1584. He had now left Segovia to visit the convents of the Reform as Vicar-General. It is clear from the context that a number of young Italians were anxious to take the habit of the Reform.

<sup>3</sup> This is the date on the copy described above, and, although P. Doria returned from his visits to the convents, as described in the first note to this letter, on March 3, 1589, we see no objection to it. For he may perfectly well have set out for a further series of visits in the late summer; there is no evidence to the contrary, and, as the early autumn is a temperate and settled time of the year for travelling, and the difficulties of travelling on foot or on a humble mount were considerable, the supposition that he made a second journey seems a likely one.

## LETTER XVIII

TO DOÑA JUANA DE PEDRAZA, GRANADA

SEGOVIA, OCTOBER 12, 1589.<sup>1</sup>

*The Saint courteously and religiously reminds this lady that he has not forgotten her. He assuages certain uneasinesses which she has felt, because of her somewhat scrupulous conscience. Let her live in dark faith, certain hope, and complete charity and fear nobody.<sup>2</sup>*

May Jesus be in your soul. I thank Him for giving me His grace, so that, as you say, I do not forget the poor. But I do not, as you also say, live a sheltered life, and it hurts me dreadfully<sup>3</sup> to think that, when you say that, you really believe it. That would be too bad after so many marks of kindness, which you have shown me when I least merited them. I have done anything but forget you; just think, how could I forget one who is in my soul, as you are? While you are walking in that darkness and in those empty places of spiritual poverty, you think that everyone and everything are failing you; but that is not surprising, for at those times it seems to you that God is failing you too. But nothing is failing you, nor have you any need to consult me about anything, nor have you any reason to do so, nor do you know one, nor will you find one: all that is merely suspicion without cause. He that seeks naught but God walks not in darkness, in whatever darkness and poverty he may find himself; and he that harbours no presumptuousness and desires not his own satisfaction, either as to God or as to the creatures, and works his own will in any way whatsoever, has no need to stumble or to worry about anything. You are progressing well; remain in quietness and rejoice. Who are you to be anxious about yourself? A fine state you would get into if you did that!

You have never been in a better state than now, for you have never been humbler or more submissive, nor have you ever counted yourself, and everything in the world, as of such little worth; nor have you ever known yourself to be so evil, nor God to be so good, nor have you ever served God so purely and disinterestedly as now, nor do you

<sup>1</sup> [Sobrino (pp. 98-9) follows MS. 13,245, which gives the date as 1588.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Letter IX, n. 1. This autograph can be seen at the Convent of the Discalced nuns at Valladolid. There are also a number of copies of it.

<sup>3</sup> [The original, *harto me hace rabiar*, a very strong expression, can denote anger ('It makes me absolutely furious') or anguish. In MS. 13,245, the copyist has crossed out the phrase and substituted *harta pena me da*, 'it causes me the greatest grief,' no doubt considering this more in character.]

any longer go, as you may have been apt to do, after the imperfections of your will and your own resolution. What do you desire? What kind of life do you imagine yourself as living in this world? How do you imagine yourself behaving? What do you think is meant by serving God, but abstaining from evil, keeping His commandments and walking in His ways as best we can? If this be done, what need is there of other apprehensions, or of any other illumination or sweetness whether from one source or from another? In these things as a rule the soul is never free from stumbling-blocks and perils, and is deceived and fascinated by the objects of its understanding and desire and its very faculties cause it to stray. And thus God is granting the soul a great favour when He darkens the faculties and impoverishes the soul so that it may not be led astray by them; and how can it walk aright and not stray, save by following the straight road of the law of God and of the Church, and living only in true and dark faith and certain hope and perfect charity, and awaiting its blessings in the life to come, living here below as pilgrims, exiles and orphans, poor and desolate, with no road to follow and with no possessions, expecting to receive everything in Heaven?

Rejoice and put your trust in God, for He has given you signs that you can quite well do so, and indeed that you ought to do so; should you do otherwise, it will not be surprising if He is wroth at seeing you so foolish, when He is leading you by the road that is best for you and has set you in so sure a place. Desire no way of progress but this, and tranquillize your soul, for all is well with it, and communicate as is your wont. Confess, when you have something definite to say; there is no need to talk. When you have anything to say you will write about it to me, and write to me quickly, and more frequently; you can always do that through Doña Ana, when you cannot do it through the nuns.

I have been somewhat indisposed, but am now well again, though Fray Juan Evangelista<sup>1</sup> is ailing. Commend him to God, and me likewise, my daughter in the Lord.

From Segovia, October 12, 1589.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fray Juan Evangelista was the Saint's (appropriately named) Beloved Disciple. He gave him the habit at Granada and for a long time lived on intimate terms with him. He sent him from Granada, where of course they both knew Doña Juana, to Segovia, and made him procurator of the Segovia priory.

<sup>2</sup> [MS. 13,245 adds the following superscription: 'To Doña Juana de Pedraza, at the house of the Archdeacon of Granada, opposite the College of the Abbots.' Cf. Sobrino, p. 99.]

## LETTER XIX

TO M. MARÍA DE JESÚS, prioress of the DISCALCED  
CARMELITE NUNS OF CÓRDOBA

MADRID, JUNE 20, 1590.

*He counsels her not to worry overmuch about the temporal business of the house. Convents have to be governed by means of virtues and desires from Heaven rather than by cares and plans for what is temporal and earthly. Let the nuns live in all religion and perfection, united with God and in God.*<sup>1</sup>

Jesus be in your soul, my daughter in Christ. The reason why I have not written during all this time, as you say, is rather that I have been in an out-of-the-way place like Segovia than because of any unwillingness, for my will is always constant, and I hope in God that it will continue to be so. I have been very much grieved at your troubles.

With regard to the temporal business of your house, I should not like you to be over-anxious about it, for God will else be forgetting you, and you will all come to have much necessity, both temporal and spiritual, for it is our solicitude that brings us to necessity. Cast your care upon God, daughter, and He will nourish you; for He that gives and is pleased to give the greatest things cannot fail in the least. See that you lack not the desire to lack and to be poor, for in that same hour your spirituality will be lacking and you will begin to grow weaker in the virtues. And if you desired poverty before, now that you bear rule you must desire and love it much more; for you must govern the house and furnish it with living desires and virtues from Heaven rather than with cares and plans for what is temporal and earthly; since the Lord tells us not to take thought for what we shall eat or what we shall put on tomorrow.

What you must do is to try to lead your soul and the souls of your nuns into all perfection and religion, in union with God, forgetting all creatures and all respect for creatures, being wrought wholly in God, and glad in Him alone, and I guarantee you all the rest. I find it difficult to think that the houses will give you anything, now that you are in such a good place as this that you have and are receiving such good nuns. Still, if I see an opening anywhere, I will not fail to do what I can.

<sup>1</sup> The autograph of this letter, in excellent preservation, is to be found in the convent of the Discalced Carmelite nuns at Córdoba.

I wish the Mother Sub-prioress great consolation. I hope in the Lord that He will give it her, so that she may have courage to continue on her pilgrimage and exile in love for His sake. I am writing to her now. To my daughters Magdalena, San Gabriel and María de San Pablo, María de la Visitación, San Francisco and all the rest, my many greetings in our Good. May He be ever in your spirit, my daughter. Amen.

From Madrid, June 20, 1590.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

I shall soon return to Segovia, as I believe.

## LETTER XX

### TO A CARMELITE NUN WHO SUFFERED FROM SCRUPLES

*He gives her prudent and wise rules for behaviour when attacked by scruples, so that they may do no harm to her soul.*<sup>1</sup>

Jesus, Mary. In these days be employed inwardly in desiring the coming of the Holy Spirit, and both during the festival and afterwards continue in His presence, and let your care and esteem for this be such that nothing else attracts you, neither consider aught else, whether it be trouble or any other disturbing memories; and during the whole of this period, even though there be omissions in the house, pass them over for the love of the Holy Spirit, and for the sake of what is necessary to the peace and quiet of the soul wherein He loves to dwell.

If you can put an end to your scruples, I think it would be better for your quietness if you were not to confess during these days. When you do confess, let it be after this manner: with regard to advertences and thoughts, whether they have respect to judgments or whether to unruly representations of objects or any other movements that come to you without the desire and collaboration of your soul, and without your desiring to pay attention to them, do not confess these or take any notice of them or be anxious about them, for it is better to forget

<sup>1</sup> The autograph is to be seen, in a fair state of preservation, at the convent of Discalced nuns of St. Joseph and St. Anne, Madrid. The person to whom it was addressed may have been one of the nuns of that community, which was founded in 1586 by some of the Saint's spiritual daughters. No date or place of writing is given (a rare occurrence with St. John of the Cross), but the context shows that the letter was written just before Pentecost, perhaps in Madrid, between 1589 and 1591.

them, although they trouble your soul the more; at most you might describe in general terms the omission or remissness that you may perchance have noted with respect to the purity and perfection which you should have in the interior faculties—memory, understanding and will. With respect to words, confess any excess and imprudence that you may have committed as regards speaking truly and uprightly, and out of necessity and with purity of intention. With regard to actions, confess the way in which you may have diverged from the path to your true and only goal, which you should follow without respect of persons—namely, God alone.

And, if you confess in this way, you may rest content, without confessing any of these other things in particular, however much interior conflict it may bring you. You will communicate during this festival, as well as at your usual times.

When anything disagreeable and displeasing happens to you, remember Christ crucified and be silent.

Live in faith and hope, though it be in darkness, for in this darkness God protects the soul. Cast your care upon God, for you are His and He will not forget you. Do not think that He is leaving you alone, for that would be to wrong Him.

Read, pray, rejoice in God, your Good and your Health, and may He give you His good things and preserve you wholly, even to the day of eternity. Amen. Amen.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

## LETTER XXI

TO M. ANA DE JESÚS, SEGOVIA

MADRID, JULY 6, 1591.

*Comforts the Mother for the vexation which she had felt when the Chapter of the Reform held in Madrid left the Saint without office. His sublime instruction exhorting her to resignation and conformity with the plans of Providence.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The original of this letter, measuring 26½ by 21½ cm., is preserved by the Discalced Carmelite nuns of the Convent of Corpus Christi at Alcalá de Henares. It was published by P. Jerónimo de San José (*History*, Bk. VII, chap. ii, § 3). For M. Ana de Jesús, cf. St. Teresa's *Foundations*, chap. xxi. [*Complete Works of St. Teresa*, III, 105.] When St. John of the Cross, as a member of the Consulta, went to live at Segovia and became confessor to the Discalced nuns there, M. Ana de Jesús was one of his most devoted and exemplary penitents.

On June 6, 1591, a Chapter General of the Reform at Madrid deprived St. John of the

Jesus be in your soul. I thank you heartily for having written to me, and this puts me under a greater obligation to you than I had before. You must be glad rather than otherwise and give hearty thanks to God because things have not happened as you desired; for, as His Majesty has ordained it thus, it is best so for us all; it only remains for us to apply our wills to it, so that we may see it as it really is. For things that give no pleasure, good and fitting though they may be, seem bad and adverse, and this clearly is not so, either for me or for anyone. For it is very advantageous for me, since, now that I am free and no longer have charge of souls, I can, by Divine favour, if I so desire, enjoy peace, solitude and the delectable fruit of forgetfulness of self and of all things; and, as for the others, it is good for them also to be without me, as they will thus be free from the faults which they would have committed through my unworthiness.

What I beg of you, daughter, is that you beg the Lord to continue His favour to me, for I still fear that they may make me go to Segovia<sup>1</sup> and not leave me wholly free, although I will do what I can to escape from this also; but, if this cannot be, Mother Ana de Jesús will not have escaped from my hands, as she supposes, and thus she will not die with this regret that, as she thinks, the opportunity to be very holy is over. For, whether I go or remain, and wherever or however I may be, I shall not forget her nor take her name from the list<sup>2</sup> of which she speaks, for truly I desire her everlasting good.

Now, till God gives us this in Heaven, let her occupy herself in practising the virtues of mortification and patience, and desire to behave in suffering in some measure as did this our great God, when He was humbled and crucified; for this life is of no use, unless we imitate Him. May His Majesty keep you and increase you in His love, amen, even as His holy and beloved bride.

From Madrid, July 6, 1591.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

Cross of office. This evidently came as a great surprise to the Segovia nuns, as this and the next letter show.

<sup>1</sup> According to P. Jerónimo (*History*, Bk. VII, chap. ii, § 2) P. Doria asked the Saint to go as Vicar to Segovia. With complete submission, he answered that his preference would be for the retirement of La Peñuela, the loneliest house which the Reform then possessed, in order to prepare himself to go to New Spain (Mexico) whither he was destined. As we know, he died five months later, at Úbeda.

<sup>2</sup> [Perhaps a list of persons for whom the Saint prayed.]

## LETTER XXII

TO M. MARÍA DE LA ENCARNACIÓN, SEGOVIA

MADRID, JULY 6, 1591.

(Fragment.)

*Tells her not to grieve at what happened at the Madrid Chapter.  
'Think only that God ordains all.'*<sup>1</sup>

... As to my affairs, daughter, let them not grieve you, for they cause no grief to me. What I greatly regret is that blame is attributed to him who has none; for these things are not done by men, but by God, Who knows what is meet for us and ordains things for our good. Think only that God ordains all. And where there is no love, put love and you will find love. . . .<sup>2</sup>

## LETTER XXIII

TO P. JUAN DE SANTA ANA

SEGOVIA.

*Believe not him that preaches the doctrine of the broad way, even though he do miracles.*<sup>3</sup>

Jesus: If at any time, my brother, any man, whether in authority or no, would persuade you to accept any doctrine of the way that is broad and of the greatest ease, believe him not, neither embrace it, even though it be confirmed with miracles, but seek penance and still

<sup>1</sup> Of this letter, written on the same day as No. XXI, we have only this precious fragment, worth a volume on Christian resignation, which was preserved by P. Jerónimo de San José (*History*, Bk. VII, chap. ii, § 4). M. María was Prioress of the Discalced nuns of Segovia when this letter was written. In a canonical deposition made during the process at Segovia (1616), she speaks of the letter and quotes from memory the last two sentences in abbreviated form, describing the occasion of its being written.

<sup>2</sup> [More literally, 'you will draw love out.']

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by P. Jerónimo de San José (*History*, Bk. VII, chap. viii, § 1). The date is probably 1591. [Sobrino (pp. 101-6) comments at length on the letter. Briefly, he believes (i) that it is only a passage from the middle or end of a letter, and that P. Jerónimo should not have prefaced it with the word 'Jesus'; (ii) that the identity of the addressee is probably but not certainly that here given; (iii) that P. Alonso el Asturicense's date of 1590 is more probable than 1591.]

more penance and detachment from all things, and never, if you would attain to the possession of Christ, do you seek Him without the Cross. . . .

## LETTER XXIV<sup>1</sup>

TO DOÑA ANA DEL MERCADO Y PEÑALOSA, SEGOVIA

LA PEÑUELA, AUGUST 19, 1591.

*He reached La Peñuela nine days previously and is very happy there. The vastness of the desert is good for both soul and body. Present occupations and future plans. Spiritual counsels.*

Jesus be in your soul. Although I have sent you a letter by way of Baeza describing the events of my journey, I was glad that these two servants of Señor Don Francisco were passing, as I can now write you these lines, which will be more certain of reaching you.

I said in my other letter how anxious I was to remain in this desert<sup>2</sup> of La Peñuela, six leagues from Baeza, where I arrived nine days ago.<sup>3</sup> I am getting on here very well, glory to the Lord, and am in good health, for the vastness of the desert is a great help both to the soul and to the body, though my soul<sup>4</sup> is in a very poor way. It must be the Lord's will that the soul also should have its spiritual desert: let whatever best pleases Him be very welcome, for His Majesty well knows what we are of ourselves. I cannot say how long this state of things will

<sup>1</sup> [Letters XXIV-XXIX will be found not to correspond exactly with those in P. Silverio's 1929-31 edition. Letter XXIV was first published by P. Sobrino, in 1950, from TG (Vol. III, p. 240, above), and has not previously appeared in English. The mode of address, the references to Don Luis and Doña Inés, and the similarity of the content with that of Letter XXVIII (in P. Silverio's edition, XXV) make it certain that the recipient was Doña Ana de Peñalosa (on whom see Vol. III, p. 4, above). External evidence of this is provided by Fray Andrés de la Encarnación, who, in describing the letter, says that it was written 'to Señora Doña Ana de Peñalosa. It tells her of his arrival at La Peñuela, sets down many praises of solitude and gives her important counsels for the quiet (*sosiego*) of her soul.' Nothing is known of the other letter sent via Baeza.]

<sup>2</sup> [The MS. has *desierto*, 'desert,' which P. Sobrino writes with a capital letter, as if the reference were to the type of hermitage-priory generally known by its Spanish name of *Desierto*. The first foundation of this kind was not made till 1592, at Bolarque, on the Tagus (*S.S.M.*, II, 282), but, as the La Peñuela priory was a particularly austere one, St. John of the Cross may have used the word in that sense.]

<sup>3</sup> [This would seem to indicate that St. John of the Cross arrived at La Peñuela on August 10, 1591, a little later than had previously been supposed. It should be noted that the Spanish has *habrá nueve días*, 'it will be nine days'—the use of the future tense which often implies approximation or doubt. P. Sobrino, however (p. 49), interprets the phrase as meaning 'exactamente el 10 de agosto.']

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the soul'; but, as the verb is in the indicative, the reference can only be to his own soul. Cf. p. 253, above: 'I am well, although my soul lags far behind.']

last, for Father Fray Antonio de Jesús warns<sup>1</sup> me from Baeza that they will not allow me to stay here for long. Be that as it may: I find I get on very well without news and the desert is an admirable training-ground.<sup>2</sup>

This morning we have just been gathering our chick-peas—we spend our mornings in that way. Some other day we shall thresh them. It is pleasant to handle these dumb creatures—better than being handled ourselves by living ones.<sup>3</sup> May God allow it to continue: pray Him to do so, my daughter. Happy though all this makes me, I shall not fail to go when you<sup>4</sup> wish.

Be careful about your soul, and do not go confessing scruples, or first motions, or mere awareness of things upon which the soul has no wish to dwell; and look after your bodily health; and do not fail to pray whenever you can.

I said in the other letter (though this one will reach you first) that you can write to me by way of Baeza, as there is a courier service, directing your letters to the Discalced Fathers at Baeza; I have notified them about sending them on to me.

My kind regards to Señor Don Luis and to my daughter Doña Inés.<sup>5</sup> May God give you His Spirit, amen, as I desire.

From La Peñuela, August 19, 1591.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'threatens': cf. the reference to Fray Antonio in Letter XXVIII (p. 276, below).]

<sup>2</sup> [*Lit.*, 'the exercise of the desert is admirable,' or, as we might say to-day, 'the desert is splendid training.']

<sup>3</sup> [St. John of the Cross is no doubt referring, somewhat grimly, to the severe handling he had received, first from the friars of the Observance, years before, and then, only a few weeks previously, from his own brethren.]

<sup>4</sup> ['You' is *ella*, which can mean either 'she' or 'you' (fem.). One would have expected *Él* ('He,' i.e. God), but we gather from the first paragraph of Letter XXVIII that Doña Ana was pressing a certain course of action on the Saint, so that the reading may be correct.]

<sup>5</sup> [Don Luis was Doña Ana's brother, and Doña Inés, one of the Saint's penitents, her niece.]

## LETTER XXV

TO M. ANA DE SAN ALBERTO, PRIORESS OF CARAVACA<sup>1</sup>

LA PEÑUELA, AUGUST (2) 1591.

(Fragment.)

*Resignation in trials. In silence and hope will be our strength.*

My daughter: You will already know of the many trials that we are suffering. God allows this for the glory of His elect. In silence and hope will be our strength. Commend me to God, and may He make you holy.

## LETTER XXVI

TO AN UNKNOWN PERSON<sup>2</sup>

LA PEÑUELA, AUGUST 22, 1591.

*If we have right intentions, and refrain from sin, all will go well with us.*

May God give us right intentions in all things and may we never knowingly admit sin. If that is so with us, the conflict<sup>3</sup> may be fierce and spread in many directions, but its end will be sure and everything will turn into a crown. Give my greetings to your sister, and my good wishes in the Lord to Isabel de Soria, and tell her I am surprised she is not at Jaén, as there is a priory<sup>4</sup> there. May the Lord be in your soul, daughter in Christ.

From La Peñuela, August 22, 1591.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

<sup>1</sup> This fragment (XXIV in P. Silverio's edition) was quoted by the recipient in the course of depositions made by her in 1616 in connection with St. John of the Cross's beatification. She describes it as having been written to her from La Peñuela.

<sup>2</sup> [This fragment was unknown when P. Silverio's five-volume edition of the Saint's works was published, but he included it in his single-volume edition, published in 1940 (Bibliography, No. 31, below). The autograph is venerated in the convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns at Chiaia, near Naples.]

<sup>3</sup> [The Spanish has *balería*, which means a collection or supply of bullets, and in this context makes little sense. I suggest as an emendation *bateria*, which, unlike *balería*, is found in Covarrubias (1611), and one of the meanings of which is 'hail of blows,' 'battering.' The context demands a freer rendering than this.]

<sup>4</sup> [I translate *monasterio* as 'priory,' rather than 'convent' (the more usual meaning at this time), because a priory of the Reform was founded at Jaén in 1588, whereas nothing is known of the existence of a convent there as early as 1591. The Spanish *no está* could be equally well rendered 'you are not' and 'she is not.' If 'you' is correct, the addressee may have been a man.]

## LETTER XXVII

TO P. JUAN DE SANTA ANA

LA PEÑUELA, 1591.

*He reassures him, telling him not to be grieved by the information that was being given against him (the Saint) with the intention of taking his habit from him.<sup>1</sup>*

Jesus . . . do not let this worry you, son, for they cannot take the habit from me save for incorrigibility or disobedience, and I am quite prepared to amend my ways in everything in which I have gone astray, and to be obedient, whatever the penance they give me. . . .

## LETTER XXVIII

TO DOÑA ANA DEL MERCADO Y PEÑALOSA, SEGOVIA

LA PEÑUELA, SEPTEMBER 21, 1591.

*He informs her of his departure for Úbeda in order to cure a slight attack of fever which needed medical aid. Congratulates Don Luis del Mercado, Doña Ana's brother, because from being a Chancery judge he has become a priest of the Lord. His own health.<sup>2</sup>*

Jesus be in your soul, daughter. Here at La Peñuela I received the packet of letters which the servant brought me. I greatly appreciate the trouble you have taken. Tomorrow I go to Úbeda<sup>3</sup> to cure a slight

<sup>1</sup> Of this letter we have only the fragment preserved by P. José de Jesús María (*Vida*, Bk. III, chap. xx). P. Juan was one of the Saint's best-loved disciples whom he had come to know at El Calvario on his arrival there from Toledo, and who later accompanied him on his journey to found the convent of Baeza and elsewhere. [P. Silverio numbers this XXVI (*Obras completas*, IV, 291), making it the last of the Saint's extant letters and supposing it to have been written at Úbeda. P. Crisógono, however (*Vida y obras*, etc., p. 439, n. 79), quotes the evidence of the recipient to prove that it was written at La Peñuela. It is here placed in its correct chronological position.]

<sup>2</sup> The autograph, beginning with the words 'I think I shall need . . .', belongs to the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Salamanca, and is reproduced photographically by P. Gerardo (Bibliography, No. 36, below) and Baruzi (No. 35). Fortunately, P. Jerónimo de San José published the letter from the autograph in its original state, and we follow his copy in the first four sentences.

[If Letter XXVIII is compared with Letter XXIV (from TG), also addressed to Doña Ana, it will probably be concluded that the second was written in answer to her reply to the first. The end of the first paragraph is clearly connected with the second and third paragraphs of the earlier letter.]

<sup>3</sup> [He did not, in fact, leave until September 28: cf. P. Crisógono, *Vida y obras*, etc., p. 445, n. 1.]

bout of fever, for I have been having attacks of it daily for over a week, and if it does not go<sup>1</sup> I think I shall need medical aid; but I go with the intention of returning here again, for in truth I am deriving great good from this holy retreat; and thus, concerning your caution to me not to go with Fray Antonio, be assured that, both in this and in all the rest that you ask, I will act with all possible care.

I am delighted that Señor Don Luis is now a priest of the Lord. May this be so for many years and may His Majesty fulfil the desires of his heart! Oh, what a happy state it would be to leave behind one's anxieties and to enrich the soul speedily with Him! Give him my good wishes. I do not venture to ask him to remember me sometimes when he is at the Sacrifice; I myself, as his debtor, shall do this always for him; for although I am forgetful I could never fail to remember him, since he is so near to his sister, whom I have always in my memory.

Give my daughter Doña Inés my many greetings in the Lord and pray both of you that He may be pleased to prepare me to be taken to be with Him.

Now I can think of no more to say, and so, on account of the fever, I stop, though I would gladly go on.

From La Peñuela, September 21, 1591.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

You write nothing of the lawsuit, if it continues or is over.

## LETTER XXIX

### TO A SPIRITUAL DAUGHTER<sup>2</sup>

#### *Worldly and spiritual riches.*

You have seen, daughter, what a good thing it is to be without money, for, if we have any, people can rob us of it and disturb our

<sup>1</sup> [P. Silverio, apparently by an oversight, omits from the edition here translated the words *y si no me quitan*, 'and if it does not go.']

<sup>2</sup> [This is the second of the unpublished letters edited by P. Sobrino (cf. p. 240, above). Fray Andrés de la Encarnación describes the addressee as 'a spiritual person, apparently a woman under the Saint's direction.' This description is supported by the tone of the letter, the opening words 'You have seen . . .' (presumably referring either to a previous instruction or to some experience of hers which she had recounted to him) and the final paragraph, suggestive of a close acquaintanceship. P. Sobrino makes the further deduction that the recipient lived near the writer, but I do not find his reasons for this convincing. There is really no clue, in the letter as we have it, to its date, to the place in which it was written or to its recipient's identity.]

quiet, and also how the treasures of the soul should be hidden away and left in peace, so that we may not know they are there or even so much as catch a glimpse of them; for there is no worse thief than one who lives in the house.<sup>1</sup> May God preserve us from ourselves; may He give us whatever pleases Him and never reveal it to us until it be His will to do so. After all, he who lays up treasures for love's sake lays them up for another, and it is well that He should keep them for Himself and enjoy them, since they are all for Him, and that we ourselves should neither see them with our eyes nor enjoy them, lest we should rob<sup>2</sup> God of the pleasure which He has in the humility and detachment of our hearts and our contempt of worldly things for His sake. It is a very great treasure, and one that brings great joy, for the soul to discover that it is going<sup>3</sup> to give Him such manifest pleasure,<sup>4</sup> and to pay no heed to the foolish ones of this world, who can keep nothing for the future.

The Masses will be said, and I shall be very glad to go if they do not advise me to the contrary.<sup>5</sup> May God keep you.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

## TRANSLATOR'S APPENDIX TO THE LETTERS

P. Sobrino (Vol. III, p. 240, n. 1, above) publishes (*op. cit.*, pp. 65-9) three fragments, apparently of letters by St. John of the Cross, which, as we have them at second-hand, it seems most suitable to relegate to an appendix. They are reproduced in MS. (N.L.M.) 13,482, in a chapter headed 'Fragments of our holy Father' (fols. 143r-150r).

<sup>1</sup> [That is to say, if we, who have spiritual treasures, set our affections on them instead of on God, we are robbing Him in the worst possible way because we are members of His own household. This thought, expressed rather cryptically here, is developed and made more explicit in the sentences which follow.]

<sup>2</sup> [The verb used, *desflorar*, suggests to P. Sobrino (p. 59) that the Saint's intention is to compare humility, detachment and contempt of the world to flowers, and it is true that Covarrubias (1611) gives the literal meaning of the word, *quitar la flor*, before derived ones, but I suspect that *flor* here means 'bloom,' 'lustre.']

<sup>3</sup> [*Lit.*, '... great joy, to see that the soul is going, etc.,' as if the treasure were God's. But I think the logical subject of 'to see' is 'the Christian.']

<sup>4</sup> [There is a play upon words here which cannot be rendered in English. The words '(very great) treasure . . . to discover' are (*harto*) *descubierto tesoro*; 'manifest' is *al descubierto*, 'open,' 'unconcealed.']

<sup>5</sup> [The words 'to the contrary' are not in the Spanish, but I take them to be implied. P. Sobrino (p. 57, n. 1) discusses the possibility that the negative particle crept in by an error, but decides against it, I am sure rightly.]

## I

A nun says in her deposition: Coming to the Madrid foundation<sup>1</sup> from Granada, and gathering that a nun needed him, he put himself to very great inconvenience to write this to her: 'Daughter, in emptiness and dryness as regards all things, God will prove those who are valiant soldiers, that they may win His battle, which are they who can drink the water in the air (*sic*), without their breasts' cleaving to the ground, even as did the soldiers of Gedeon, who conquered with dry clay<sup>2</sup> and lamps enkindled within it, signifying dryness of sense, and within it the good and enkindled spirit.'<sup>3</sup>

## II

The same nun says: To M. María del Nacimiento, who was Prioress at Madrid, he wrote another letter of such a kind that it astonished her to see how closely he was in touch with her interior life when he was so many leagues distant. I remember a few words of the letter, in which he taught her 'to seek the treasure hidden in the field, although she thought she was not finding it, for, if she found it, it would no longer be hidden, and consequently would not be a treasure.'

## III

To a nun of Segovia, he wrote when he was being<sup>4</sup> persecuted, exhorting her to bear opposition well: 'Love deeply those who oppose you and love you not, for in that way love is engendered in a breast where there is none. Even so does God deal with us, loving us in order that we may love Him by means of the love which He has for us.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [*Translator's note*: The Madrid convent of the Reform was founded on September 17, 1586—not, as P. Sobrino says, February 25, 1586, which was the date of the foundation of the Madrid priory. So busy was St. John of the Cross, during 1586, making foundations in the south that he is unlikely to have gone to Madrid before April 1587, when he was in Valladolid for the Chapter held there.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Translator's note*: The 'dark pitchers' of Judges vii, 16, and *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, II, ix (Vol. I, p. 94, above).]

<sup>3</sup> [This fragment was published in *Vida y obras*, etc. (1946: Bibliography No. 34, below), p. 1,233, from a copy on fol. 1,005 of MS. (N.L.M.) 12,738.]

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.*, 'when he is.']

<sup>5</sup> [This extract is from a deposition made by M. Elvira de San Angelo, Prioress of the Reformed convent of Medina del Campo.]

## SUNDRY DOCUMENTS

(WRITTEN OR SIGNED BY ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS)

### I

JUDGMENT GIVEN BY THE BLESSED FATHER UPON THE SPIRITUALITY AND THE METHOD OF PROCEDURE IN PRAYER OF A NUN OF OUR ORDER.<sup>1</sup>

IN the affective way of prayer followed by this soul there seem to be five defects, if it be judged by the standard of pure spirit. First, it appears that she has a great eagerness for possession,<sup>2</sup> whereas true spirituality is always characterized by great detachment in the desire. Secondly, she has overmuch confidence and too few misgivings lest she stray interiorly; unless a soul have these misgivings the Spirit of God never keeps it from evil, as the Wise Man says. Thirdly, she seems anxious to persuade others to believe that her experiences are good and abundant; this never happens with true spirituality, which, on the contrary, desires men to make little account of their experiences and to depreciate them, as the spiritual soul itself does. Fourthly, and most important, there seem to be no signs of humility in this method of prayer which she follows; now when the favours granted to the soul are genuine, as she says they are in her case, these experiences are not habitually communicated to the soul that is not first humble and annihilated with interior humility; and if she had these signs she would not fail to write something of the matter here, and indeed much, for the first thing that it occurs to the soul to speak of and to prize are the signs of humility, which furthermore are so evident that they cannot be hidden. It is true that they are not equally notable in all apprehensions of God, but these apprehensions, which she here describes as union, are never found apart from them. *Quoniam antequam exaltetur anima*

<sup>1</sup> P. Jerónimo, in his *History of St. John of the Cross* (Book VI, chap. vii, § 8), has handed down to us his judgment, written by the Saint at the request of P. Doria. The nun in question had caused great anxiety to the superiors of the Discalced Carmelite Order, and P. Doria, who was Vicar-General at the time, ordered her to prepare a full account of her spiritual life and experiences, which is the basis of the Saint's report here reproduced.

<sup>2</sup> [*Propiedad*. See p. 202, n. 7, above.]

*humiliatur*,<sup>1</sup> *et: Bonum mihi, quia humiliasti me.*<sup>2</sup> Fifthly, the style and language which she here uses do not seem in agreement with the spirituality to which she here lays claim: for spirituality teaches us to write in a simple style without the affections and exaggerations which are found here. All this that she says about what she said to God, and what God said to her, seems to be nonsense.

My advice would be that she should be neither ordered nor permitted to write anything about such things as these, nor should her confessor give any appearance of wishing to hear about them, save in order to deprecate them. Let her be tested in the practice of the virtues alone, and especially in self-contempt, humility and obedience. Such acid tests will result in the purification of her soul, which has received so many favours. But the tests must be severe, for there is no evil spirit that will not undergo some degree of suffering to save his own reputation.

## II

### FOUNDATION OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS OF MÁLAGA<sup>3</sup>

#### Jesus Mary.

To the honour and glory of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three Persons and one true God alone, and to that of the glorious Virgin Saint Mary of Mount Carmel.

This monastery of Saint Joseph of Málaga, belonging to the Discalced Carmelite nuns, was founded on the seventeenth day of February in the year one thousand five hundred and eighty-five. It was founded with the favour of Señora Doña Ana Pacheco and of Señor Pedro Verdugo, her husband, purveyor to the galleys of His Majesty. For this purpose were rented the houses of Doña Constanza de Ávila. To the foundation came the following nuns: first, M. María de Cristo, native of the city of Ávila, daughter of Francisco de Ávila and of Doña María del Águila, his wife, who in the world was called Doña María de Ávila; M. María de Jesús, as Sub-prioress, a native of the town of Beas, daughter of Sancho Rodríguez de Sandoval Negrete and of

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs xviii, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxviii, 71 [A.V., cxix, 71].

<sup>3</sup> This short account of the foundation of the Convent of Discalced nuns at Málaga is found on the first folio of the original Book of Professions and Elections of that convent. It is written by Fray Diego de la Concepción and signed by St. John of the Cross.

Doña Catalina Godínez, his wife, who in the world was called Doña María de Sandoval. These brought with them Sister Lucía de San José and Sister Catalina Evangelista and Sister Catalina de Jesús, all choir nuns duly professed.

The foundation was made in poverty, with no temporal aid. May it please God to preserve it in poverty until the consummation of the age, that it may have fruition of eternal riches for ever with Him. Amen.

Given in the said Convent of Saint Joseph, on the first day of July in the year one thousand five hundred and eighty-six. Signed by our names.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS,  
*Vicar Provincial.*

FRAY DIEGO DE LA CONCEPCIÓN,  
*Scribe.*

### III

LICENCE WHEREBY THE DISCALCED NUNS OF CARAVACA MAY  
EFFECT A CONTRACT ON LEGITIMES AND POSSESSIONS  
(DECEMBER 15, 1585)<sup>1</sup>

Jesus Mary.

Fray John of the Cross, Vicar Provincial in this district of Andalusia of the Discalced Carmelites. By these presents I give leave and permission to the Reverend Father Prior and the members of our Convent of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios in Triana of Seville, whereby they may effect the contract and agreement which the said Convent has made on the legitimes and possessions of the father and mother of Fray Juan de Jesús, son of the Licentiate Gaspar de Jaén and of Doña Isabel de Segura, his wife, inhabitants of this city, and may receive the two hundred ducats which, by reason of the profession of the said Fray Juan de Jesús, are given to the said Convent on behalf of his said parents. That which on account hereof may be proved to have been given to the Convent is to be taken into account and allowance may be made and is hereby made for any deeds and articles which are firm and valid, and there may be given letters of payment and settlement,

<sup>1</sup> From the Archivo de Protocolos, Seville. The original document, which is in the Saint's writing throughout, was reproduced in the *Boletín Carmelitano*, April 15, 1929.

and there may be renounced any other inheritances and possessions which now and at any other time may belong to the said Convent on behalf of the said Licentiate Gaspar de Jaén and Doña Isabel de Segura, his wife.

Given at Granada, signed by my name and sealed with the seal of my office on the fifteenth day of December, 1585.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS,  
*Vicar Provincial.*

#### IV

LICENCE WHEREBY THE DISCALCED NUNS OF SEVILLE MAY BUY AND MOVE INTO A NEW HOUSE (GRANADA, APRIL 12, 1586)<sup>1</sup>

Jesus Mary.

By these presents, I, Fray John of the Cross, Vicar Provincial of both the friars and the nuns of the Discalced in the Order of Our Lady of Carmel in this district of Andalusia, do here license the most noble Señor Pedro de Cerezo, inhabitant and resident of the city of Seville, and the Mother Prioress Isabel de San Francisco, and the Discalced nuns of the Convent of Saint Joseph in the said city, all of them together and each of them *in solidum*, to negotiate and effect the purchase of the houses which belonged to Pedro de Morga, near Santa Cruz, and to draw up and authorize any letters of sale, with their chapters and clauses firm and valid in and out of law. For all this and all that concerns it I give my full authority and permission, in so far as I may and am able to give it by right.

Item, I give leave to the said Mother Prioress and the nuns of the said Convent to transfer their house and present abode to the said house when it seems best to them to do so.

In witness thereof I have set my signature to this licence and sealed it with the seal of my office.

At Granada on the twelfth day of April, 1586.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS,  
*Vicar Provincial.*

<sup>1</sup> The original document, first published by P. Silverio, is in the keeping of the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Seville.

## V

LICENCE OF FRAY FRANCISCO DE LA ASCENSION AND FRAY  
DIEGO DE LA RESURRECCIÓN (1586)<sup>1</sup>

I, Fray John of the Cross, Vicar Provincial of the Discalced Carmelites in the district of Andalusia. By these presents I give leave to the Reverend Father Fray Francisco de la Ascensión, Rector of our College of Our Lady of Carmel at Baeza, to present himself to the Most Reverend Ordinary of the diocese of Jaén, for a licence to confess and preach, since I consider him apt and sufficient for that purpose, in so far as human frailty allows. And likewise I give leave to the Reverend Father Fray Diego de la Resurrección, member of the said College and master of students therein, to present himself likewise for preaching and confession to the said Most Reverend Ordinary.

Given in Granada, signed by my name and sealed with the seal of my office, on the twenty-first day of . . . <sup>2</sup> in the year 1586.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS,  
*Vicar Provincial.*

## VI

LICENCE TO THE DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS OF MÁLAGA  
FOR THE PURCHASE OF HOUSES (NOVEMBER 23, 1586)<sup>3</sup>

Fray John of the Cross, Vicar Provincial of the Discalced Carmelites, both of friars and of nuns, in the district of Andalusia. By these presents I give leave to the Mother Prioress and nuns of our Convent of Saint Joseph and Saint Peter, in the city of Málaga, for the purchase of the houses which are in the possession of Doña Úrsula de Guzmán, as guardian of her son and heir, and for the authorizing of any deed or deeds upon the sale of the said houses, which shall be firm and valid in and out of law. And by these presents I declare the said purchase to be good, and in so far as pertains to me I stand security for the price that is given for them and for any other contract which may be made concerning the said purchase. Given in Málaga, signed

<sup>1</sup> N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 770.

<sup>2</sup> The month is omitted in the original.

<sup>3</sup> N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 754.

with my name and sealed with the seal of my office on the twenty-third day of November, 1586.

Item, I give leave to the said Mother Prioress and the said nuns to take possession of the said houses, when they have them, at what time and in what manner best suits them. Given *ut supra*.<sup>1</sup>

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS,  
*Vicar Provincial.*

## VII

### ELECTION OF PRIORESS OF THE CARMELITE NUNS OF GRANADA (NOVEMBER 28, 1586)<sup>2</sup>

On the twenty-eighth day of the month of November, 1586, was made the election of the Prioress, Sub-prioress and Treasurer in this Convent of Saint Joseph of Granada. I, Fray John of the Cross, Vicar Provincial, was present at the said election; and testify that Mother Beatriz de San Miguel was canonically elected Prioress, Mother Ana de la Encarnación Sub-prioress and Sister Mariana de Jesús and Sister María de Jesús Treasurers. And in witness of the truth thereof I have signed this with my name upon the day, month and year *ut supra*.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS,  
*Vicar Provincial.*

## VIII

### LICENCE TO ENGAGE IN LITIGATION GIVEN TO THE DISCALCED NUNS OF CARAVACA (MARCH 2, 1587)<sup>3</sup>

Fray John of the Cross, Vicar Provincial of the Discalced Carmelites in this district of Andalusia. By these presents I give leave to the Prioress and nuns of the Convent of the glorious Saint Joseph, which is that of the Discalced Carmelites, in the town of Caravaca, to lay their case before any lawful tribunal, concerning the houses which the Fathers of the Company have taken from them, and which belong

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph and signature are in the hand of the Saint; the remainder is in that of his secretary.

<sup>2</sup> The original is in the Book of Elections at Granada and was published by P. Gerardo in his *Autógrafos*, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> The original is in the possession of the Carmelite nuns of Caravaca.

to the site of their Convent, which houses belonged to Alonso de Robres, inhabitant of the said town of Caravaca; and to this end they may delegate their power to any attorney or attorneys of any of the chancelleries of his Majesty, as may seem best to them, and they may continue their suit in any lawful manner. For all this and all that concerns it I give them my full authority, as I am lawfully entitled to do.

In faith hereof I have given this document, signed by my name and sealed with the seal of my office.

Dated in our Convent of Our Lady of Carmel, in the town of Caravaca, on the second day of March, 1587.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS,  
*Vicar Provincial.*

## IX

### FACULTY GRANTED TO THE DISCALCED OF LA FUENSANTA (MARCH 8, 1587)<sup>1</sup>

Fray John of the Cross, Vicar Provincial of the Discalced Carmelites in this district of Andalusia. By these presents I give leave to the Father Prior and members of the house of La Fuensanta<sup>2</sup> to negotiate as seems best to them with Juan Ruiz de Ventaxa upon the demand and application made by his son Fray Francisco de Jesús María to the said Convent of La Fuensanta, and to make any assignment or assignments and renouncements with regard to this matter.

Item, I give them leave to negotiate with Juan Sánchez de Guzmán, brother of Fray Francisco de San José, concerning the property which may come into the possession of the said Convent through the said friar; upon this matter they may draw up any deed or deeds, treaties and agreements, and may receive the instructions of the said Fray Francisco, as also in the case of the said Juan Ruiz de Ventaxa.

Given in our College of Baeza, signed with my name and sealed with the seal of my office, on the eighth day of March, 1587.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS,  
*Vicar Provincial.*

<sup>1</sup> The original belongs to the Ayuntamiento of Úbeda; a photographic reproduction of it was published in the *Boletín Carmelitano*, March 15, 1928. The signature is the Saint's.

<sup>2</sup> La Fuensanta is a shrine near Villanueva del Arzobispo, in the province of Jaén, where, in 1583, P. Gabriel de la Asunción founded a house of the Discalced Reform, afterwards abandoned.

## X

FACULTY GIVEN TO THE MOTHER PRIORESS OF BARCELONA FOR  
THE RECEPTION OF THREE NOVICES (OCTOBER 1588)<sup>1</sup>

Fray John of the Cross, Definitor-in-Chief of the Congregation of Discalced Carmelites and President of the Consulta of the said Congregation, in the absence of our Most Reverend Father Vicar-General, etc. According to the decision of our Consulta, by these presents I give leave to the Mother Prioress of the Discalced Carmelite nuns of our Convent in the city of Barcelona for the reception into our habit and Order of three novices, according to the form and order laid down by our laws with respect to the reception of novices.

In faith hereof I have given this document, signed with my name and sealed with the seal of our Consulta, in this our Convent of Segovia in the month of October of the year 1588.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS,  
*Definitor-in-Chief.*

FRAY GREGORIO DE SAN ANGELO,  
*Secretary.*

## XI

CONFIRMATION OF THE PRIORESS OF SAINT JOSEPH'S,  
VALENCIA (NOVEMBER 4, 1588)<sup>2</sup>

... and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Giving her, as by these presents we do, the cure and administration of the said Convent, and our nuns therein; and, in the virtue of the Holy Spirit, I order all the nuns of the said Convent, by holy obedience and under precept, to obey this Prioress. In faith hereof, I have given this, signed by my name and by the Secretary of the Congregation, and sealed with the seal of our Consulta in this our Convent of Segovia, on the fourth day of November in the year 1588.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS,  
*Definitor-in-Chief.*

FRAY GREGORIO DE SAN ANGELO,  
*Secretary.*

<sup>1</sup> The original is in the possession of the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Barcelona.

<sup>2</sup> The original belongs to the Convent of Discalced nuns in Valencia. The signature is in the hand of St. John of the Cross. The first words are missing.

## XII

A RECEIPT FOR ARTICLES BELONGING TO THE SACRISTY  
(NOVEMBER 14, 1588)<sup>1</sup>

Fray John of the Cross, Prior in the Convent of Our Lady of Carmel in the city of Segovia, acknowledges the receipt, from the hand of Señor Francisco de Castro, of the ornaments and other articles for the sanctuary, from Señora Doña Ana de Peñalosa, as described in this schedule. In witness to the truth hereof I have set my name on the fourteenth day of November, 1588.

FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS.

<sup>1</sup> These lines were written by St. John of the Cross at the foot of the inventory of the articles given by Doña Ana de Peñalosa to the church which she had just built for the Discalced Carmelites at Segovia. A photographic reproduction was published in the *Mensajero de Santa Teresa y de San Juan de la Cruz* for January 1930.

## SPIRITUAL SAYINGS ATTRIBUTED TO SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS<sup>1</sup>

**B**y virtue of the command which has been given to me, says Father Fray Eliseo de los Mártires,<sup>2</sup> I make the following declaration: I knew our father Fray John of the Cross and had to do with him on many and diverse occasions. He was a man of medium height, with a serious and venerable expression, somewhat swarthy and with good features; his demeanour and conversation were tranquil, very spiritual and of great profit to those who heard him and had to do with him. And in this respect he was so singular and so effective that those who knew him, whether men or women, left his presence with greater spirituality, devotion and affection for virtue. He had a deep knowledge and a keen perception of prayer and communion with God, and all the questions that were put to him concerning these matters he answered with the highest wisdom, leaving those who consulted him about them entirely satisfied and greatly advantaged. He was fond of recollection and given to speaking little; he seldom laughed and when he did so it was with great restraint. When he reprovéd others as their Superior (which happened frequently) he did so with a gracious severity, exhorting them with brotherly love, and acting throughout with a wondrous serenity and gravity.

**FIRST SAYING.**—He greatly objected to imperious commands being given by superiors to their religious, especially in the Reformed Orders, and was wont to say that nothing shows a man to be so unworthy of commanding others as the fact that he commands them imperiously; we should rather endeavour to bring it about that those under us never leave our presence downcast.

He never spoke with duplicity or artifice, to which he took the strongest objection, for he said:

<sup>1</sup> This document was first published by P. Gerardo, whose version has been collated with N.L.M. MS. 13,245, fols. 248-51. Another copy, differing slightly from this, is in the possession of the Carmelite friars of Segovia. Preference is here given to the N.L.M. copy.

<sup>2</sup> Fray Eliseo de los Mártires (1550-1620), an Extremaduran, was professed at Granada and came into contact with St. John of the Cross on several occasions. Later, he became one of the principal Fathers of the Reform in Mexico.

**SECOND SAYING.**—That artifice violated the sincerity and purity of the Order, and that many did it grievous harm by inculcating methods of prudence of a human kind which caused souls spiritual sickness.

**THIRD SAYING.**—He said concerning the vice of ambition that in reformed communities it is almost incurable, being the most infectious of all vices; it colours and taints the rule and conduct of the Order with appearances of virtue and of the greatest perfection, so that warfare with evil becomes sterner and spiritual sickness more incurable. And he said that this vice is so powerful and pestilent as to make such sinners of those who suffer from it that the devil is able to throw their lives into confusion and entanglement and thus to confound their confessors. He had great perseverance in prayer and in the practice of the presence of God and in anagogical movements and acts and ejaculatory prayers.

**FOURTH SAYING.**—He said that the entire life of a religious is (or ought to be) a doctrinal sermon, with these words, which should be repeated several times a day, for its text: Die and perish<sup>1</sup> rather than sin. He said that these words, if they spring from the will, cleanse and purify the soul and make it to grow in the love of God, in grief at having offended Him and in firmness of purpose to offend Him no more.

**FIFTH SAYING.**—He said that there are two ways of resisting vices and acquiring virtues. The one is common and the less perfect, which is when you endeavour to resist some vice, sin or temptation by means of the acts of virtue which conflict with this vice, sin or temptation and destroy it. If, for example, I am conscious of the vice or temptation of impatience or of the spirit of vengeance in my soul because of some harm which I have received or some insulting words, I then resist it by means of some good meditation, such as that on the Passion of the Lord (*qui cum male tractaretur, non aperuit os suum*); or by means of meditation upon the blessings which are acquired by suffering and of the conquest of a man by himself; or by thinking that God commanded that we should suffer, since suffering brings us profit, etc. By means of such meditations I am moved to suffer, accept and desire such insults, affronts or evils as this, to the glory and honour of God. This manner of resisting and fighting such temptation, vice or sin begets the virtue of patience, and it is a good method of resistance, though difficult and less perfect.

<sup>1</sup> [Sp., *morir y reventar*: 'die and burst.']

There is another way of conquering vices and temptations and acquiring and gaining virtues, which is easier, more profitable and more perfect. According to this, by its loving anagogical movements and acts alone, without any other exercises whatsoever, the soul resists and destroys all the temptations of our adversary and attains virtues in the most perfect degree. This, the venerable Father was wont to say, becomes possible after this manner. When we feel the first movement or attack of any vice, such as lust, wrath, impatience or a revengeful spirit when some wrong has been done to us, we should not resist it by making an act of the contrary virtue, in the way that has been described, but, as soon as we are conscious of it, we should meet it with an act or movement of anagogical love directed against this vice, and should raise our affection to union with God, for by this means the soul absents itself from its surroundings and is present with its God and becomes united with Him, and then the vice or the temptation and the enemy are defrauded of their intent, and have nowhere to strike; for the soul, being where it loves rather than where it lives, has met the temptation with Divine aid, and the enemy has found nowhere to strike and nothing whereon to lay hold, for the soul is no longer where the temptation or enemy would have struck and wounded it. And then, oh, marvellous thing! the soul, having forgotten this movement of vice, and being united and made one with its Beloved, no longer feels any movement of this vice wherewith the devil desired to tempt it, and was succeeding in doing so; in the first place, because, as has been said, it has escaped, and is no longer present, so that, if it may be put in this way, the devil is as it were tempting a dead body and doing battle with something that is not, feels not and is for the time being incapable of feeling temptation.

In this way there is begotten in the soul a wondrous and heroic virtue, which the angelic doctor Saint Thomas calls the virtue of a soul that is perfectly purged. This virtue, said the holy Father, is possessed by the soul when God brings it to such a state that it feels not the movements of vice, nor its assaults, attacks or temptations, because of the loftiness of the virtue which dwells in this soul. Hence there arises within it and comes to it a most lofty perfection which takes from it all concern about being praised or exalted or insulted or humbled or about whether men speak well of it or ill. For, as these loving and anagogical movements raise the soul to so high and sublime a state, their truest effect upon the soul is to make it forget all things other than its Beloved, Who is Jesus Christ. Hence, as has been said, when it is

united with its God and in converse with Him, it finds that no temptations can wound it, since they cannot rise to that place whither the soul has risen or to which God has raised it: *Non accedet ad te malum.*

Here the venerable Father Fray John of the Cross said that attention must be paid to beginners, whose anagogical or loving acts are not so ready, quick or fervent as to enable them to absent themselves entirely from their surroundings and unite themselves with the Spouse. If, he said, they find that, on making this anagogical act, they do not completely forget the vicious movement of the temptation, they should not fail to take advantage of all possible weapons and considerations in order to resist it, until they vanquish the temptation completely. And the way wherein they must resist and vanquish it will be this. First let them resist it with the most fervent anagogical movements whereof they are capable, and let them perform and practise these many times; and, if these suffice not (for the temptation is strong and they are weak), let them then use all the weapons (namely, good meditations and exercises) that they find necessary for this resistance and victory. And let them believe that this method of resistance is excellent and sure, since it includes within itself all the crafts of war which are both important and necessary.

And he would say that those words of the 118th Psalm, *Memor esto verbi tui servo tuo, in quo mihi spem dedisti*, are so powerful and effective that by their means anything whatsoever may be accomplished with God.

And he assured us that, if we devoutly repeated the words of the Holy Gospel, *Nesciebatis quia in his, quae Patris mei sunt, oportet me esse?* our souls would be filled with a desire to do the will of God in imitation of Christ Our Lord, and with a most ardent desire to suffer for love of Him and for the good of souls.

He also said that when once the Divine Majesty intended to destroy the city of Constantinople completely by means of a most cruel tempest, the angels were heard to repeat these words three times: *Sanctus Deus, Sanctus Fortis, Sanctus Immortalis, miserere nobis.* By means of these supplications God was at once appeased and the storm ceased, having already caused much harm and threatened worse. Thus, he would say, these words have power with God in such individual needs as fire, water, winds, tempests, wars and other necessities of soul and body, honour, possessions, etc.

SIXTH SAYING.—He would also say that love for the good of one's neighbour is born of the spiritual and contemplative life, and that, as

this is commanded us by our Rule, we are also clearly commanded and charged to have this zeal for the profit of our neighbour. For the Rule aims at making persons observe the mixed and compounded life so that they may embrace and include within themselves two lives, the active and the contemplative, in one. This mixed life the Lord chose for Himself because it is the most perfect. And the state and method of life of the religious who embraces it is the most perfect of its kind; but, in saying and teaching this, he would say that it should not be repeated publicly because of the few religious that there were, and lest these should become uneasy, but rather we should hint at the contrary until there were a great number of friars.

And, when he expounded the words of Christ Our Lord already quoted: *Nesciebatis quia in his, quae Patris mei sunt, oportet me esse?* he said that that which is of the Eternal Father must here be understood of nothing else than the redemption of the world, and the good of souls, wherein Christ Our Lord uses the means fore-ordained by the Eternal Father. And he would repeat that marvellous phrase written in confirmation of this truth by Saint Dionysius the Areopagite: *Omnium Divinorum Divinissimum est cooperari Deo in salutem animarum*. That is, that the supreme perfection of any souls in their rank and degree is to progress and grow, according to their talent and means, in the imitation of God, and the most wondrous and divine thing is to be a co-operator with Him in the conversion and conquest of souls. For in this there shine the very works of God, and to imitate Him in them is the greatest glory. For this reason Christ Our Lord called them works of His Father and cares of His Father. And it is clearly true that compassion for our neighbour grows the more according as the soul is more closely united with God through love; for the more we love, the more we desire that this same God shall be loved and honoured by all. And the more we desire this, the more we labour for it, both in prayer and in all other possible and necessary exercises.

And such is the fervour and power of God's charity that those of whom He takes possession can never again be limited by their own souls or contented with them. Rather it seems to them a small thing to go to Heaven alone, wherefore they strive with yearnings and celestial affections and the keenest diligence to take many to Heaven with them. This arises from the great love which they have for their God and it is the true fruit and effect of perfect prayer and contemplation.

SEVENTH SAYING.—He was accustomed to say that two things serve the soul as wings whereby it is able to rise to union with God:

these are affective compassion for the death of Christ and for our neighbour; and that, when the soul pauses to have compassion for the Cross and Passion of the Lord, it must remember that herein He was working our redemption all alone, as it is written: *Torcular calcavi solus*. From this thought the soul will receive many other most useful thoughts and meditations.

EIGHTH SAYING.—In a certain address which he gave in the Convent of Almodóvar del Campo he spoke of solitude and repeated the words of Pope Pius II of blessed memory, who said that a restless friar was worse than a devil. And he added that, if religious had to pay visits, they should always go to houses of good repute, where the conversation was restrained and seemly.

NINTH SAYING.—Expounding the words of Saint Paul, *Signa apostolatus nostri facta sunt super vos, in omni patientia, in signis, et prodigiis, et virtutibus*, he pointed out that the Apostle set patience above miracles. Patience, therefore, is a surer sign of the apostolic man than the resuscitation of the dead. I can testify that Fray John of the Cross was an apostolic man with respect to that virtue, for he endured with a singular patience and tolerance all the trials that beset him, which were very great and would have brought down the cedars of Mount Lebanon.

TENTH SAYING.—Speaking of those who had to confess women, as one experienced herein, he would say that they should be somewhat stern with them, for to treat them gently only affected their feelings and they failed to profit thereby. And he said that God had punished him with regard to this, by hiding from him a certain woman's very grave sin; she had deceived him for some time, and she did not trust him because he was gentle with her; and the Lord ordained things so that it should be revealed to him in another way within our own Order, and of this I have full information.

ELEVENTH SAYING.—He once said to me that if we should see urbanity lost in the Order, which was part of Christian and monastic life, and if instead there should enter cruelty and ferocity in superiors (which is a vice proper to barbarians) we should mourn the Order as ruined. For, he said, who has ever seen men persuaded to love the virtues and things of God by harshness and with blows? In this connection he would quote those words from the 34th chapter of Ezechiel: *Cum austeritate imperatis eis, et cum potentia*.

And he said that, when religious are brought up with such irrational severity, they become pusillanimous in undertaking things of great

virtue, as if they had been brought up among wild beasts, as Saint Thomas says in the 20th Opusculum of *De Regimine Principum*, Chapter III, in these words: *Naturale est enim, ut homines sub timore nutriti in servilem degenerent animum, et pusillanimes fiant ad omne virile opus et strenuum*. And he also quoted the words of Saint Paul: *Patres, nolite ad iracundiam provocare filios vestros, ne pusillanimes fiant*.

**TWELFTH SAYING.**—And he said it was to be feared that to train religious in this way was a mark of the devil, for if they are trained by this method of fear, their superiors dare not warn or reprove them when they go astray. And if, by this means or by any other, the Order should reach such a state that those of its members (especially the seniors) who, by the laws of charity and justice, in meetings and chapters and on other occasions, dared not say what they should, either through weakness, pusillanimity or fear lest they should offend their superior and therefore should be given no office (which is a common ambition), the Order would become completely relaxed and ruined.

**THIRTEENTH SAYING.**—So true is this that the good father Fray John of the Cross would say that he would prefer that such friars should not make their profession in the Order, for if they did so it would be governed by the vice of ambition and not by the virtue of charity and justice. And this (he would say) is clearly seen when nobody raises protests in chapter, but everything is ceded and allowed to pass, because everyone is intent on pressing his own interests. This causes serious harm to the common good and nourishes the vice of ambition.

He said that denunciations should be made without correction, since what has just been described is a pernicious vice opposed to the common good.

And whenever he said these things it was after he had spent long periods in prayer and colloquy with Our Lord.

**FOURTEENTH SAYING.**—He would say that superiors must often beseech God to give them religious prudence so that they might rule wisely and lead the souls committed to their charge to Heaven. He was accustomed to praise Father Fray Agustín de los Reyes for this virtue, which he had in an excellent degree.

**FIFTEENTH SAYING.**—I sometimes heard him say that there is no lie so carefully devised and composed that, if we study it carefully, we cannot tell it in one way or in another to be a lie.

Nor, he would say, is there any devil so completely transfigured as an angel of light as not to be recognizable if he be looked at carefully.

Nor is there any hypocrite so artfully concealed and dissimulated that you cannot discover him after a few glances.

SIXTEENTH SAYING.—With regard to a severe punishment imposed by a certain superior, he pronounced a phrase divine in its wisdom: Christians, and especially religious, must always see that they chastise the bodies of delinquents, lest their souls be endangered, but they must not use extraordinary cruelty, as do tyrants and those who rule by cruelty. He said that superiors should often read the words of Isaías, chapter xli, and of Saint Paul (1 Corinthians ix, 10).

SEVENTEENTH SAYING.—On one occasion, when a candidate for the habit was proposed to him, he had several conversations with him, and advised that he should not be received because a bad odour came from his mouth, and this signified that he was unhealthy inwardly; and as a rule, he said, such persons are evilly inclined, cruel, false, faint-hearted, murmurers, etc.; for it is a rule of philosophy that the habits of the soul correspond to the temper and humour of the body.

This is all I remember at the moment. If I remember more, I will advise our Father General in fulfilment of his command. Given in Mexico, on the twenty-sixth day of March, 1618.—Fray Eliseo de los Mártires.

## APPENDICES TO THE WORKS OF SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

### A.—DOCUMENTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE SAINT'S LIFE, WORKS AND VIRTUES<sup>1</sup>

#### I

#### A NARRATIVE DEALING WITH THE LIFE OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS BY M. MAGDALENA DEL ESPÍRITU SANTO

Jhs. M<sup>a</sup>.

**I**N the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ I obey the command which has been given me to speak in detail of our venerable father Fray John of the Cross. God knows with what bashfulness and difficulty I do it, not being able to tell if what I write is of any importance. If it is not so, this will be due to my lack of understanding; your Reverence, using the understanding with which God has enlightened you, will judge if any of it is important. If it has already been narrated, and more fittingly narrated, as I expect is the case, I beg Your Reverence, for the love of God, to do the office of a father, and to bear patiently with my defects and ignorances, together with the great delay with which I write this; the reason has been the rheumatism in hands,<sup>2</sup> which has made it impossible for me to write more.

On the first occasion when our venerable father Fray John of the Cross visited Beas, he arrived there a short time after leaving his prison in Toledo. He was weak and weary, but his words and demeanour were such that it was easy to see how intimate was the life which he lived with God. For some days he bore himself with such

<sup>1</sup> [This appendix contains the majority of the documents answering to this description published by P. Silverio. Irrelevant documents and passages have been omitted, together with a few documents and passages which repeat almost verbally others which are included. The order of arrangement is approximately chronological; where the date of a document is not given and cannot be conjectured, the document is placed according to its subject. The narrative of M. Magdalena del Espíritu Santo comes first, on account of its length, and the important 'Reply' of Fray Basilio Ponce de León is given a place apart.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Un corrimiento a las manos*. The word *corrimiento*, though archaic in this sense in Spain, is still used for 'rheumatism' in some parts of Spanish America.]

restraint and spoke so few words, that it was wonderful to see him, but in his converse with M. Ana de Jesús he revealed the heavenly treasures possessed by his soul. On certain occasions that presented themselves, our venerable Father said that our holy Mother Teresa of Jesus was 'his beloved daughter' and M. Ana de Jesús replied: 'This father Fray John of the Cross seems a very good man, but he is very young to speak of our Mother Foundress as "my daughter."' And this very thing she wrote to our holy Mother, begging her to pray God to provide them with some person to whom to communicate certain interior matters concerning herself and the sisters of which they needed to speak.

Our holy Mother answered her: 'I assure you that I should be very glad to have my father Fray John of the Cross here; he is indeed very dear to me and one of those with whom it has profited me greatly to have converse. Let my daughters speak to him quite plainly, for I assure them that they may do so as with myself, and it will be of great satisfaction to them, for he is a very spiritual man and has great experience and learning. Those of us here who have been instructed by him miss him very much. Let them give thanks to God, therefore, that He has ordained that they should have him so near. I am writing to him that he is to help you all, and I know that of his great charity he will do so in any case of necessity that may present itself.'

I had myself been afflicted by Our Lord with certain interior trials and a religious who was my confessor had been commanded under obedience to go far away for a long time.<sup>1</sup> I was therefore bidden to make my confession to our venerable Father, who was there just then: I was the first nun to do so on that occasion. When I began my confession, and when he talked to me, as he did at some length, I was filled inwardly with a great light which brought me quiet and peace and a particular love of suffering for God's sake, together with desires to acquire the virtues which are most pleasing to Him; and this inward light, which seemed to penetrate my soul, lasted for some time, a thing I had not previously experienced. The other nuns also learned something of the great power which the holy Father had with God and of the good effects which he produced in their souls; and also (which was still more wonderful) his great humility, combined with his great worth and constant integrity, and his great mortification, and the detachment which he had from all that is not God, as well as his great

<sup>1</sup> Fray Pedro de los Ángeles, superior of El Calvario, who was succeeded by St. John of the Cross when he was chosen to go to Rome on the business of the Discalced Reform.

gentleness and kindness. His words were full of light from Heaven, so that even to those who understood not what was contained in them they brought satisfaction and comfort, together with desires and esteem of the virtues.

The words of this holy man concerning faith, hope and charity, and austere conduct, strict obedience, continual prayer, sure confidence in God and supernatural prudence seem to have implanted these virtues in those with whom he had to do. The general profit which they brought, and also the profit in particular cases, it is impossible to deny.

All the nuns grew to have the greatest love and respect for him, for in his holy life there was nothing worthy of reproach, while there were many things most exemplary and edifying to all.

When the holy Father left his prison, he took with him a little book in which he had written, while there, some verses based upon the Gospel *In principio erat Verbum*, and some verses which begin: 'How well I know the fount that freely flows, Although 'tis night,' and the stanzas or *liras* that begin: 'Whither hast vanished?' as far as the stanzas beginning 'Daughters of Jewry.' The remainder of them he composed later when he was acting as Rector of the College at Baeza. Some of the expositions were written at Beas, as answers to questions put to him by the nuns; others at Granada.

This little book in which the holy man wrote while in prison, he left in the Convent of Beas and on various occasions I was commanded to copy it. Then someone took it from my cell—who, I never knew. The freshness of the words in this book, together with their beauty and subtlety, caused me great wonder, and one day I asked him if God gave him those words which were so comprehensive and so lovely. And he answered: 'Daughter, sometimes God gave them to me and at other times I sought them.'

He took great care to flee from idleness, and when he had some free time he would use it in writing, or would ask for the key of the garden and go and weed it and do other similar things; and sometimes he busied himself in making certain walls and floors in our convent. If he had a companion, he took him with him so that he might help; if not, he asked for assistance from some of the sisters. He also liked to dress the altars, which he would do with great neatness and delicacy, and in silence.

On occasions when the church was closed to us,<sup>1</sup> and others said

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'on occasions of interdict'—i.e. when the faithful were forbidden for some reason to attend the Divine offices.]

that it might be opened and we might go in to hear Mass by the privileges of the Order, the holy Father would say to us: 'Daughters, humility and subjection to the Ordinary are more important than the making use of privileges. Do not forget that, for there will always be sufficient people to look after the privileges.'

He also occasionally wrote spiritual things that were very profitable. There, too, he composed the Mount, and drew a copy with his own hand for each of our breviaries. Later, he added to these copies and made some changes in them.

He was greatly inclined to the mortification of the passions and to prayer and the frequenting of the sacraments, and he devised certain proofs by which he could examine the reverence and esteem with which the nuns communicated. He taught that one must go with great resignation to seek permission, not only to communicate, but for anything whatever. We were to say to our superior: Mother, does your Reverence desire that I should communicate?—and similarly with regard to anything else for which we asked permission.

Once when the sisters were talking of certain approaching days on which there would be Communion and on which they desired permission to be given them to communicate, the superior had asked our venerable Father to practise the sisters in mortification just as he practised the friars who were under his charge. He heard Sister Catalina de San Alberto, who was a lay sister, and had great virtue and devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament, say with regard to one of these approaching days in which Communion was obligatory: 'On that day Communion is certain; on these other days that we are speaking of, it will be necessary to ask for permission.' The holy Father took note of that phrase which she used—'I am certain of Communion'—and, without showing that he had taken note of it, remembered the day of which the sister had spoken, although it was some time ahead, and, when Sister Catalina de San Alberto came up to the altar,<sup>1</sup> he kept her a short time without giving her the Host. She rose and other sisters came and were communicated; then she came again to communicate but the holy Father did as he had done before; again she rose and gave place to others. Finally she came back once more to communicate but the holy Father went away without giving her the Host. The sister remained in confusion, not knowing the reason for this; and afterwards, when

<sup>1</sup> [*Lit.*, 'to the little window,' i.e. the opening in the chancel-grille, through which enclosed nuns were communicated.]

they were all together in the presence of the venerable Father, some of the nuns asked him why he had not communicated the sister who was so certain of herself. 'For this reason,' he answered, 'that she may understand that what she imagined is not the case.' Then the sister recalled what she had said and the others remembered it for the future.

At other times, in order to increase the nuns' fervour and to teach them true spirituality and the practice of the virtues, he would ask them certain questions; and would discuss the replies which they gave so that the time passed very profitably and they learned much from him, for his words were bathed in heavenly light. I tried to set down some of these things so as to find refreshment in reading them when he was absent and we could not talk to him, but they took the papers from me without giving me an opportunity to copy them. I can set down here only what they left:

He who works for God with pure love not only cares nothing that men should know it, but does not even do it so that God Himself may know it. Even though it might never be known, such a man would not cease to render the same services with the same joy and love.

Another saying with respect to the conquering of the desires:

Have a general desire to imitate Jesus Christ in all His works, conforming thyself with His life, upon which thou must meditate in order to be able to imitate it and to behave in all things as He would behave.

In order to be able to do this it is necessary to renounce every desire or taste, if it be not purely to the honour and glory of God, and to remain in emptiness for the love of Him who in this life neither did nor desired to do aught save the will of His Father, which He called His meat and food.

In order to mortify the four natural passions, which are joy, sorrow, fear and hope, profit by what follows.

Strive always to prefer, not that which is easiest, but that which is most difficult; not that which is most delectable, but that which is most unpleasing; not that which gives most pleasure, but that which gives no pleasure. Prefer not that which is restful, but that which is most wearisome; not that which gives consolation, but that which gives no consolation; not that which is greatest, but that which is least; not that which is loftiest and most precious, but that which is lowest and most despised; not that which is a desire for anything but that which is a desire for nothing. Strive not to go about seeking the best of things, but the worst; and strive to cultivate detachment and emptiness and poverty, for Jesus Christ's sake, with respect to that which is in the world.

Against concupiscence :

Strive to work in detachment and desire others to do so.

Strive to speak in thine own despite and desire all to do so.

Strive to think humbly of thyself and desire others to do so.

Among other things that he wrote, the venerable Father once wrote a saying for each of the nuns to further their spiritual progress. Although I copied all these, only the two following were left to me :

Have fortitude in thy heart against all things that may move it to that which is not God and love suffering for Christ's sake.

Readiness in obedience, joy in suffering, mortification of the sight, the desire to know nothing, silence and hope.

On such occasions as presented themselves, our venerable Father wrote letters to the nuns of Beas, both sisters and superiors, containing maxims and teaching of great importance. I do not know what they have done with them, for it is more than forty years since I left the convent for the foundation of this convent of Córdoba.

When our venerable Father went to found the College of Baeza, in which M. Ana de Jesús, who was Prioress at Beas, had given him no little help with letters to persons of importance, both ecclesiastical and lay, she also tried to help him, as far as she could, with regard to ornaments of the sacristy and other necessary things. The holy Father received them humbly and gladly, and, though in few words, thanked her warmly for them, and gave proof of his esteem for them. His was a celestial joy, since he was about to labour in rendering that new service to the Divine Majesty.

A few days after this foundation had been made, he went back to Beas with Fray Juan de Santa Ana, whom the Mothers asked if he had been at that foundation. The said Father did not reply and his saintly superior said that the Father had laboured gladly whenever an occasion presented itself, that he was a good worker and helped them and caused them esteem for his virtue, so that he obliged them to strive after virtue anew.

When he was Rector of that College, and his Vice-Rector was Father Fray Gaspar de San Pedro, he sent him several times to preach at Úbeda. On one occasion, among others, they begged him urgently to accept an invitation to return and preach at a solemn festival. He replied that he would do so, but, because he omitted to say that he

would do so if permission were given him, his saintly superior refused him permission, and, although they expected him at Úbeda and rang the bells for his sermon, he did not go there on that occasion. The venerable Father having taken him to Beas as his companion, Father Gaspar de San Pedro told the nuns what had happened, as we have described it. 'It is better that a man should not preach at all,' was the holy Father's comment, 'than that he should preach of his own will, for the mortification, though he dislike it, will bring him greater profit. If this Father or any other should speak to them of such things, let him explain that such things are done here below to mortify them, so that we may make easy for one another the practice of true mortification which there should be among us.'

The venerable Father wrote to one of the superiors known to me, advising her not to profess a certain novice. This superior did not take his advice and persuaded herself that the result would not be what the holy man had foretold—namely, that if they professed her she would cause them uneasiness and give them much cause for anxiety. So she made all possible haste and concluded certain things concerning the said profession and then professed her without waiting for the Father to come. In two days' time he arrived. When they told him that that novice had made her profession, he did not repeat his prophecy but went away without saying anything to the superior or to any other person, and went on to other convents on his round of visits, until essential obligations compelled him to return. Before many years had passed there happened to that nun and to the convent precisely what the Father said.

With a view to the foundation of the convent of our Mothers of Granada, at the request of M. Ana de Jesús, the Father went from Beas to Ávila for our Mother Saint Teresa. But her Reverence excused herself, alleging that she had in hand the foundations of Palencia and Burgos.<sup>1</sup> He then entrusted the making of this foundation to M. Ana de Jesús and sent for M. Antonia del Espíritu Santo and M. María de Cristo to help her, and also told them to take M. Beatriz de Jesús from the Toledo convent. They reached Beas some time in December,<sup>2</sup> very weary with so long a journey made at a time of the severest cold. But the greater were the trials which these things brought them in the service of God, the greater was their content, encouragement and joy,

<sup>1</sup> Actually she had only that of Burgos, the Palencia foundation having already been completed.

<sup>2</sup> On December 8.

and their readiness to suffer other new and greater trials for Our Lord's sake.

Some days afterwards, the holy Father accompanied M. Ana de Jesús and the other Mothers who went to Granada. When he was in that city he helped them in every way that he could, and I do not remember the particular things which they said had happened to them.

After some time our Mothers asked that a foundation should be made at Málaga. They suggested for its superiors M. María de Cristo, M. Lucía de San José, who had gone from the convent of Beas to the foundation of Granada, and also M. Catalina de Jesús, who had been professed at Granada. And the venerable Father went to Beas for M. María de Cristo, whence they all went together. Five of them went to Málaga, and for various reasons it seemed well that one of those who had gone from Beas should remain at Granada and return to Beas when occasion offered, as was done after some time.

When the venerable Father had arrived from the Málaga foundation, he went there with them, and on the road the mount of M. María de Cristo took fright and ran away, for what reason nobody knew, and threw M. María de Cristo with considerable force on to a great cliff, and such was the violence of her fall that all who saw her thought it had killed her and dismounted with incredible anxiety and sorrow. For some time the Mother, who had a great wound in her head, was unconscious, until the holy Father arrived and laid his hands on her, and applied his handkerchief to the wound and wiped it, whereupon the Mother came to herself and felt able to go on, so they continued the journey immediately. Some of those who were there affirmed that much of the blood from the wound had remained on the cliff and related what had happened on the journey. The Mothers wrote about this to the convent at Beas and of the marvellous way in which M. María de Cristo grew well enough to finish her journey to Málaga, and was also able to share in the labours and anxieties of the foundation, for which there was no lack of occasion, or of difficulties to offer to God. Among these was the case of a nun who lost her senses and threw herself out of a window and died from the injuries which she sustained: this was a matter which grieved the whole Order and especially those who were nearest to her.

On this occasion the holy Father was at the Chapter which was being held at Lisbon, and, before returning to his own convent, he heard of the matter, and, with his accustomed charity, endeavoured to

console the nuns and had two of them brought from the convent of Caravaca so that they might help in the choir and other exercises. One of these, M. Ana de la Encarnación, was elected sub-prioress when she arrived at Granada, and in her place M. Antonia del Espíritu Santo went to Málaga, together with M. María de San Pablo, the other nun who was brought from Caravaca. On account of this and the prayers of the holy Father, it pleased God that very soon there entered novices, persons of importance, for the observances of the Order and the increase of the house; here, as elsewhere, the words, counsels, letters and habits of the holy Father were heavenly lights for the illumination and welfare of their souls.

Our venerable Father likewise accompanied M. Ana de Jesús from Granada to Madrid to found the convent there.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 1589 was made the foundation of this convent of Córdoba, dedicated to the glorious saints Anne and Joseph, and the choice of the nuns who came to this convent was made by our venerable and holy Father. As superior he chose M. María de Jesús, from whose virtues and qualities he derived great satisfaction. She was a native of Beas and the younger of the two sisters who founded the convent there; the holy Father had talked with her and confessed her many times. He had also chosen her to be sub-prioress and novice-mistress of the foundation of Málaga, and in this and all her offices she worked well and always gave a good account of what was commended to her. She was very prudent and strict in her observance of all manners of government. Her mortifications and penances were very great and no less was her charity, while in prayer she was ever ready, persevering and continuous. When her Reverence was superior and I was sacristan or portress, I had several times to go to her with messages; and when she delayed in giving me a reply I would ask her for the love of God to give it me, so that I might give it to the person who was waiting while I went to attend to other necessary occupations. And she would answer me very modestly and gently: 'Wait, sister, for first of all we must needs commend it to God so that we may not go astray.'

She exercised herself in prayer for many years with very great faith and confidence. She was three times elected prioress, and in other convents they desired to have her in the same office, being sure of the satisfaction that would be given by her wise rule in things spiritual and temporal. During the last years, when she was not superior, she was charged by the superior to look after the work, and both this and other

<sup>1</sup> These two lines are interlinear, but the hand is that of M. Magdalena.

things that were given her to do, she did with perfection. What she did with extreme success was to profit by her time; if she were without occupation for a single moment, she would betake herself to a little place which was set apart for the purpose and there she would be habitually found on her knees, or prostrated in prayer, her eyes full of tears which she shed with a joyful and serene countenance.

During the time when she had charge of the novices in the convents of Málaga and Córdoba, the profit and joy and satisfaction which she brought to them became clear. This was due to her great vigilance for the profit of their souls, while neither in this nor in aught else did her great peacefulness, tolerance, serenity and joy ever fail her; she was ever composed in her demeanour and very religious. I lived in her company at Beas for several years, and also in Córdoba during the years that she was there, and I always saw that she esteemed poverty, and strove to be most punctilious in obedience and pious in the extreme, kind to the sick and fond of engaging in humble occupations; all this very sincerely. God tried her patience through adversities and trials which came to her in many ways. During the last years of her life she suffered from several serious and painful illnesses, and as a remedy for these ills and those of her soul she had frequent recourse to the sacraments. She greatly esteemed and loved the sacraments, and frequented them very devoutly all her life; this devotion set its mark upon her and endeared her to many, and much evidence could be given concerning it.

I have described these virtues of M. María de Jesús almost without meaning to do so, in order to show how excellent was the choice which our venerable Father made of her as superior and how solicitous was this Mother about religious observances, both as to herself and as to those under her charge, and the concern which she had about giving a good account of everything to God, Whom she besought fervently for the good of her own soul and of the souls of those who were in her charge. And once, among the many occasions when she prayed thus, Our Lord answered her, saying that none of her daughters would be condemned to eternal punishment. The Mother said nothing of this until her last illness, when she was making her confession on her death-bed, and then she told it to Fray Pedro de Santa María, her confessor, and he related it after her death, which was as exemplary as her life had been.

From the time she came to this foundation she ordered and settled its affairs in such a way that they all proceeded with notable piety and

peace, and acquired a good name which through the goodness of God has lasted to this day. May He be blessed for it!

To this end great help was found in the counsels of our venerable Father and the advice that he gave when occasion offered. Only two letters containing such advice have been kept, which, since the instruction contained in them is most sublime, I shall set down after describing the other nuns whom he chose for this foundation, all six of whom were most able, virtuous and exemplary. I was undeservedly granted the favour by God that the rest were equally good. May it please my good Jesus that I be not confounded for having failed to profit as I should.

From the convent of Málaga, together with the said Mother, there came M. María de San Pablo, who was a native and a professed nun of the convent of Caravaca. This mother, on account of the unhappy death of the nun in Málaga who lost her senses, was ordered by our venerable Father to go to Málaga with another nun a few months after the foundation. There she showed as great virtue and set as good an example as she had done in Caravaca, where she had been chosen for this purpose, by our venerable Father, on account of her good reputation. She was both able and intellectual and had also all the sense and prudence that could be desired, and was so pleasant and tranquil that, without failing in the least in her religious observances, she won every soul. Not only the nuns and the Order, but all those who had to do with her in connection with her offices—whether as doorkeeper or as superior—esteemed, loved and obeyed her, and this she merited by her many and great virtues and in particular by the gift that God gave her of lightening the trials and difficulties of others and persuading them to be guided by Him. Although her words were few, the good results of those words upon the hearers were many. She was the best in all manual exercises, and, through the strength which God gave her to perform them and the joy with which she did so, was the inspiration and example of the community. When she had novices under her, she brought great profit to their souls, making them desirous of acquiring the virtues and increasing in them both joy and mortification, and thus producing nuns noteworthy in religious observance.

In these exercises she was engaged under obedience for about twenty-one years, after which God gave her a most happy death. She made acts of faith and reverence to the sacraments and received them with reverence so great that it would have edified the very stones and would have sufficed to convert heretics had there been any present.

His Divine Majesty took her to Himself of a pleurisy at the age of forty-eight years, in the month of September 1610. In all her behaviour she did honour to the noble and Christian example set her by her parents, which was very noteworthy.

Besides these two Mothers who came from the convent of Málaga, there came also a novice whom they had received as a lay sister and who had been there for two years, so that she was able to be professed a short time after coming to Córdoba. She was called Bernardina de San Francisco and was a great servant of Our Lord; out of her continual ill-health she drew great spiritual profit.

From our convent at Seville there came to be sub-prioress of this foundation M. Leonor de San Gabriel, who had been for some years the companion and attendant of our Mother Saint Teresa of Jesus. She had been taken by her Reverence from the house at Malagón to the foundation of Beas, and thence to that of Seville. She was greatly loved by our glorious Mother Saint Teresa of Jesus by reason of her great virtues, which were written in her face; and, together with a notable discretion and prudence, she had an angelic purity and sincerity, being a person of great prayer and divine sentiments, as was shown in her words, which inspired all to love and serve God. Although she had continuous ill-health, she had also great patience and tranquillity, encouraged all and laboured as much as she was able, and, wherever she was, inspired everyone with peace and with outward and inward quietness.

She was in this house for a little more than five years, after which time she had a serious illness, being given up by the doctors and thought to be on the point of death. But Our Lord gave her to understand that He still needed her here to exercise her in other and greater trials, and that she should become superior at Sanlúcar.<sup>1</sup> She discussed this with her spiritual adviser, with all the secrecy that the matter demanded. Soon she began to recover from her illness and God inspired the Mothers of the convent at Sanlúcar to elect her by unanimous agreement as their superior. They sent for her to take over her office, which she did, giving great edification and satisfaction, not only to the nuns and to their superiors, but to everyone who had to do with her. When the period of her office was over, she was brought to Seville, where she was also elected superior for two or three periods of three years—I do not remember exactly for how long—and, while she was there, God took her to Himself, to reward her for all that she had

<sup>1</sup> Sanlúcar la Mayor, a convent founded in 1590.

suffered for love of Him, both as to ill-health and as to other trials, and for the many kinds of mortification which she had endured, not only with great patience but also with joy.

A great part of all this was shared by her companion who came to this foundation from the convent at Seville. Although her age and constitution gave promise that she would have the strength to perform the work which is usually done in foundations, God brought things to pass concerning Sister María de la Visiración (as she was called) according to His own good pleasure. On her journey she stayed at Guadalcázar,<sup>1</sup> where all the nuns met on their way to Córdoba (for it had turned out to be necessary to wait at Guadalcázar for a few days) and were entertained by Don Luis Fernández de Córdoba, a son of the lord of that town, and at that time Dean of Córdoba, afterwards becoming Bishop of Salamanca and of Málaga and Archbishop of Santiago and of Seville, whence God took him from this exile and vale of tears that he might have fruition of Him.

According to the will of God, there came to her at Guadalcázar, though she was the youngest and most high-spirited of the nuns, an indisposition which lasted continuously for seven or eight days, of such a kind that she suffered ceaselessly and was unable to follow the rule of the community. This indisposition developed into a terrible hydropsy, which was a living death to her, and the doctors marvelled at her great patience and joy and eagerness to encourage others, for which she had particular grace and desire and felicity, and great understanding and capacity, and such devotion and virtues so great that I cannot describe or indicate them. Later she was elected sub-prioress, and this office, like others which were given to her under obedience, she performed with great perfection and exactness. She was a native of Alcalá de Henares and had been professed at Seville. The serious and dangerous illness which she suffered compelled doctors and surgeons to apply severe remedies, all of which she endured with great patience and joy; and although our venerable Father knew less of her than of any others who came to this foundation, she certainly was not the one to give least satisfactory and perfect example of her great virtues and devoutnesses.

Our venerable Father entrusted her choice to M. Isabel de San Francisco, who was superior of our foundation of Seville, and she obeyed him, choosing her from among the rest for the occasion of this foundation, since she had experience and illumination from God;

<sup>1</sup> About twelve miles from Córdoba, on the road to Seville.

after which time God was pleased to call her to Himself. She received the sacraments and remained in possession of her faculties until the moment of her death, to the general consolation of those who were present, both of the Provincial, Mother Superior and confessors, and of the nuns her companions. She died on December 19, 1595, when she had not yet completed the period of her office as sub-prioress, which office she fulfilled, though with unusual difficulty, until her death.<sup>1</sup>

From the convent of Beas, our venerable Father chose Sister Juana de San Gabriel for the foundation of this convent. This sister had been professed at Beas, and, when our venerable Father was Rector at the College of Baeza (of which town she was a native), he had been her confessor, and had known her, while she was still in the world. The nuns were greatly influenced by what they heard of the satisfaction which the holy Father felt at this sister's vocation, great spirituality and faculty for recollection, and so she was received and given the habit, although she had no dowry with which to help the convent. Our venerable Father confessed her and gave her communion both when she was a novice and after she had been professed. He always esteemed her humility and fervent desires for mortification and penance, for which she had great inclination, and her continual exercise of which obliged her superiors to see to the restraining of her fervour lest her health should suffer. She continually made use of many and most severe disciplines and employed hair shirts and other mortifications which were quite extraordinary.

She had both skill and grace in her practice of all the offices of the community and in aiding the nuns therein with humility and charity, to the profit of her soul and her edification of her companions. She had a most beautiful voice, of which she made use in the Divine office and also at times of recreation, and there was also a natural charm and grace in all her words and sayings. Thus if from time to time she failed to put in an appearance at recreation, on account of necessary occupations, her superiors would endeavour to find somebody else to do her work so that the community should not be deprived of the pleasure and delight which they took in recreation when she was present. This was due to no effort of her own, but to a natural aptitude, quite devoid of artifice or premeditation; and yet the others were not slow to realize that all she said was in conformity with Christianity and

<sup>1</sup> [Here the writer adds: 'which was on the twentieth of December in the year 1595: if I remember rightly, it was in the month of December:']

true devotion, which she greatly esteemed and in which she had great fervour and gave great edification. God took her after she had suffered long and borne much illness during her last years, with great patience and courage; she was well prepared for death, having for all this time read and performed the acts and exercises of the manner of holy dying, which she had with her continually. It was on the day of the glorious Saint Augustine, in the year 1621, that His Divine Majesty took her from the pains of this vale of tears to eternal rest and the reward of her good life. Her loss caused very great loneliness, which is felt to this day.

God brought me in her company from the same convent, where I came to receive the habit, from a place thirty leagues away, in La Mancha de Aragón, where I was born, called Belmonte. I was professed in Beas and remained for thirteen years in that holy house. I consider it a particular act of mercy on the part of God that obedience should have brought me where there were so many perfect examples of all the virtues as in these nuns aforementioned, so that they should cover and endure my faults with their great charity, and aid me, in sickness and in health, as they have done, like true mothers and sisters of my soul, both in bodily things and in spiritual, in such a way as cannot be described. This Our Lord Jesus Christ will do on the day when He reveals to the world all the works that have been performed in His holy service, and it will also be revealed how ill I have profited by this good which I might have learned from the other nuns who have been brought to this house by true vocation for a religious life and have worked so truly in His service.

I have said all this so that it may be seen how important it is to make choice of suitable people for the foundations. Because our venerable Father did this so carefully, the result, through the goodness of God, has been due observance, peace, quiet and a good name for this convent, and nothing has happened to its discredit. I believe that this has arisen from the prayers and desires of our venerable Father to the Lord, for which he will have received the rewards of glory. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Although the venerable Father wrote many letters and maxims to the nuns of this convent, due care was not taken to preserve them. At the time of the foundation of this house two miracles happened. In a

<sup>1</sup> After a long digression the writer goes on to reproduce three letters written by St. John of the Cross, which will be found elsewhere in this volume and are therefore not given here.

well which had long been dry, and at the hottest period of a year which was particularly dry, so that the majority of the wells in this part of the country had no water, Our Lord provided a very great abundance of water so that the work of adapting the house for conventual purposes could be continued. M. María de Jesús told a man to lower a bucket into the well, for the men were unable to continue their work. He was unwilling to do so, and certainly it seemed foolish to tell him to draw water from a dry well, but when he drew up the bucket it was full of water, which was quite fresh and clear and very abundant, and did not fail until it was necessary to close it up after several years (I believe it must be more than twenty years), because a grave was being dug and the well was in the place where deceased nuns were buried.

It is not known if our venerable Father played any part in this, and thus nothing has been said about it, nor about another very great miracle which Our Lord performed on the eve of the day when we were about to place the Most Holy Sacrament in the convent. The bell was ringing, and the staircase of the bell-tower, which is lofty and narrow, was full of matting from the church. They suggested that he should light some of the matting as there was no illumination, and, without realizing the danger of fire, he did so, and was badly burned and choking for breath. His name was Sebastián de Escavias.

A few hours before, with great ceremony, they had brought us an image of Our Lady, very beautiful and richly adorned, so that we might place it on the high altar. It would be about three-quarters of a metre high or a little more. It was given by a Peruvian who, in his will, had ordered it to be given to this convent, which he knew was about to be founded.

The man commended himself to Our Lady of Light, for thus the image was named, and immediately someone (it is not known who or how) reached through a little window, took it from the flames and placed it on the roof of an apartment near the tower. This was not in front of the window but slightly to one side; and in a most miraculous way a large number of people saw it and came to the fire. Then they marvelled, and gave thanks to God, to Whom nothing is impossible, and the nuns, who were all around the holy image, besought God to help them in this necessity.

On the next day, with great solemnity and devotion, the Lord Bishop, Don Francisco Pacheco, placed the Most Holy Sacrament in the chapel. He was very glad to have this convent in Córdoba, for he had desired and striven for it since leaving Málaga, where he also had a

particular affection for the nuns of our convent and was accustomed to give them alms.

What this house received from his Lordship was the church of Saint Anne, which was a shrine of great devotion, and is in the best and healthiest part of the city. This gift was received with general pleasure by all the natives. May He Who can do all things reward him and them.<sup>1</sup> Amen. Amen.

## II

### LETTER BY FRAY DIEGO DE LA CONCEPCIÓN (BUJALANCE, NOVEMBER 15, 1603)<sup>2</sup>

Jesus.

. . . Our father Fray John of the Cross, who said the first Mass at Duruelo and was the founder of that holy priory, for which reason, and for many more, he is given the title of founder of this holy Order (for that priory, though afterwards abandoned, was the first in our sacred Order) . . . was a very great contemplative and engaged in prayer of a most lofty kind. This I know because, when he was Prior at Granada, I was one of his novices and was under him for a long time; and, when he was Vicar Provincial of these two provinces of Seville and Granada, at a time when they had no provincials, I was his companion and had to do with him for a long time.

This said Father of ours, Fray John of the Cross, was also a holy man, of great patience, and desirous of suffering for God's sake; this I know because, when he was persecuted by certain friars of our holy Order and was sent to La Peñuela, I was at that time in that holy house, and, during the whole period in which we were there together, I never heard him speak ill of any of his persecutors, nor did he murmur or say ill of another in his presence; and, if anyone were imprudent in speech, he would tell him to be silent.

While he was at La Peñuela his fatal illness began and they took him to Úbeda to be cured; here, at that time, the Prior was Fray Francisco Crisóstomo. When they had purged and bled him, his fever subsided, but so much matter gathered in one foot that it swelled up, and after a few days (I was myself present at the time) they made an incision on the arch of his foot. About half a pint of matter must have come out;

<sup>1</sup> P. Jerónimo de San José writes: 'All this paper is in the handwriting of M. Magdalena del Espíritu Santo, a nun of Córdoba.'

<sup>2</sup> An autograph letter. N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 1,037. [The first paragraphs are omitted as being irrelevant to our subject.]

the doctor was astounded at seeing so much. After this they made four more incisions—two at one side of the arch and two more at the other—so that there were five in all. From these wounds our Father derived great spiritual joy and gave thanks for them to Our Lord, saying: 'Greatly do I thank Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast been pleased to give me in this foot alone five wounds such as Thou hadst in Thy feet, hands, and side. How have I deserved so great a favour?' And, though his pain was as great as can be imagined, he never complained, but bore it all with great patience.

After his death, they buried him in the church, and on one penitential night the Prior commanded that the lamp should be put out, as is the use and custom. And, when it had been quenched, the church was still very bright, and the religious could see that that brightness issued from the grave of the holy Father, Fray John of the Cross.

Further, I have heard that the cloths which were placed on his wounds have wrought many miracles, as will be certified by the religious who were at Úbeda at that time. . . .

Having read this, I ratify what has been said. It is all true *in verbo sacerdotis* and is dated in the convent of Our Lady of Carmel, at Bujañance, on the fifteenth day of November in the year 1603.

FRAY DIEGO DE LA CONCEPCIÓN.

FRAY BERNARDO DE SANTA MARÍA,  
*Prior.*

FRAY JUAN DE SAN PEDRO,  
*Secretary.*

### III

REPORT BY FRAY LUCAS DE SAN JOSÉ (SEGOVIA,  
AUGUST 20, 1604)<sup>1</sup>

Jesus Mary.

In fulfilment of the command of our Father General,<sup>2</sup> in which he orders us to say what we know concerning the virtues and lives of the departed and the wondrous things that God has wrought in them and through them, I say as follows: In this convent of Segovia I knew our father, Fray John of the Cross, when he was Definitor, for the space of

<sup>1</sup> N.L.M., M.S. 12,738, fol. 841. The letter is signed by Fray Lucas de San José.

<sup>2</sup> This, like many of the following reports, was written in response to an order issued by the General of the Discalced Order on March 14, 1614, with the object of obtaining as much information as possible concerning the life of St. John of the Cross.

three years. I was a witness of the blamelessness of his life, which was full of many virtues; in particular he lived in the presence of Our Lord, as could be clearly seen by his addresses and his conversations, not only with the religious but also with those of the world with whom he spoke. He would at once lead the conversation to the things of Our Lord, and for this he had a most singular ability; he spoke of Our Lord better than I have ever heard anyone else speak of Him.

He had also a great gift for government, for, without losing any of his meekness and gentleness, which were great, he could when necessary reprove those under him severely and correct their faults. There was one noteworthy case in particular in this convent in which he showed his great ability and also the tranquillity of his heart, which he never lost on such an occasion. It was on one of the days after Easter when a sermon was to be preached and the bell had been rung for it. There were a great many people in the church, both the founders of the convent and other persons. This holy Father was in choir, with the other friars, singing the Mass, and, when it was time for the sermon, he sent for me to notify the Father who was to preach, that the time had come. The Father answered that he could not preach, and, when I had twice given this answer to Fray John of the Cross, he told me a third time, very quietly, to go and deliver the message, and to tell this Father that he was needed, and to say to him, briefly and without making any disturbance, that he was not to fail to do what was required of him. But the Father who was to preach, being very obstinate, would not come, saying that he was not ready. Our blessed Father knew that he did not refuse to come because of indisposition, but from obstinacy, and because he was not in the humour; instead of growing angry, or showing any perturbation, or leaving the choir to speak to him, he took no notice of him and sent to notify the celebrant that the Mass was to go on. He lived with him in perfect peace and tranquillity for about a fortnight without saying anything to him about the matter. But when somebody came one day to enquire for this friar, the holy Father said that he was indisposed and could not come down; and in this way he continued to show his displeasure until the friar confessed his fault in the refectory, when he reprovved him in a restrained but very telling way.

He allowed all this time to pass because he knew that, so long as the person concerned was unrepentant, it would be of no use to reprove him, but would only do great harm; whereas by waiting in this way, commending the matter in the meanwhile to God, he was preparing

him to receive his correction with humility, and also to do such penance as was fitting, to our edification. And this was one of the things for which that same Father was wont later to praise the holy Father in his eulogies of him.

Among his other great virtues was that of humility; on no account would he allow it to be said that he was the founder of the Reform, or one of the first two founders. If this matter was touched upon, he would at once exclaim: 'Stop saying that!' He was always very willing to allow others to converse with important people, leaving for himself insignificant persons, and the brethren, with whom he conversed with great affability, ever seeking an occasion to speak to them of Our Lord and of the manner in which they should pray.

He had great respect for religious, whoever they were, and for ecclesiastical matters, and he would allow none to speak of them in his presence, save in terms of praise; if anyone did so, he always reproved him. He was greatly addicted to decency in Divine worship, and he himself would often come and help to arrange things that had to be done in church.

He slept very little—about two hours nightly—and he spent a great part of each night writing and busying himself with vigils and prayer. . . .

I heard this same Father say one day, when all the friars were present, that he blushed when he remembered all the mistakes he had made in matters of government. This caused all of us that were present great edification, for he had ever great talent for government, as several of the oldest of the Fathers bore witness.

FRAY LUCAS DE SAN JOSÉ.

#### IV

#### LETTER BY ISABEL DE SAN JERÓNIMO AND THE NUNS OF CUERVA CONCERNING THE SAINT'S ESCAPE FROM PRISON<sup>1</sup>

*A brief account by a nun of this convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns of Cuerva, named Isabel de San Jerónimo, concerning what she knows of our venerable Father, Fray John of the Cross, whom she knew and with whom she had to do on several occasions.*

First, I, Isabel de San Jerónimo, declare that, during the time I knew our Father, Fray John of the Cross, and had to do with him, I

<sup>1</sup> N.L.M., M.S. 12,738, fol. 819.

recognized the very great and admirable virtues which shone in him. He had very great patience in the most severe trials which he had to suffer at the beginning of the Reform of our sacred Order; for the Calced Carmelites of Toledo kept him for many days imprisoned in their convent, where he suffered greatly; so much so that a point was reached when he seemed to be at death's door. Finding himself in this condition, he let himself out of a window in the room where he was imprisoned; this window is so high that merely to look at it from the ground makes the head swim, and thus his escape was miraculous rather than natural. He reached the ground at a place that was surrounded so that there was no way out. Finding himself in difficulties, and not knowing what he could do, he went to sleep for a time, and when he awoke found himself in the street, so that he could reach our convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns in Toledo. On the road from the house whence he escaped to ours there are always many people, and it was in the day-time that he came, so Our Lord set him free in such a way that, as I have said, he was able to reach our convent. It was I who spoke to him at the turn when he arrived;<sup>1</sup> he seemed at the point of death and asked us to help him.

At this time M. Ana de la Madre de Dios, a nun of that convent, was ill; and, hearing that our father Fray John of the Cross was there, she said that she needed to make her confession and asked for him to be brought to her. He went and heard her confession, but he was so worn out and ill that we had to keep him in the convent and church, lest the Calced fathers should re-capture him, from the morning of his arrival until the evening of the same day.

Great as were the trials he had suffered, which had brought him to such an extremity, his patience was no less great, and we never heard from him a word of complaint or murmuring; there shone in him the greatest humility, and both in this virtue and in that of patience he was a wonderful man and set a great example.

The Mother Prioress of that convent, M. Ana de los Ángeles, in view of the great need of the holy Father that we should help and comfort him, sent for Don Pedro González de Mendoza, uncle of the Conde de los Arcos and a Canon of Toledo Cathedral, a great servant of God, well known to us all. She begged him to take the Father into his house, which he did, keeping him there for several days. And, when he was

<sup>1</sup> From other accounts we learn that the doorkeeper was one Leonor de Jesús, but that Isabel de San Jerónimo had been temporarily substituted for her as being more discreet and experienced. [Cf. the account on p. 319, below.]

fit to travel, he sent him with a servant from his own house to a priory of the Discalced Fathers of our Order far from Toledo; and when the servant came back he wondered greatly who this holy Father could be who emitted such fragrance.

This is what I can say with all truth concerning this holy man, and, since it is true, I sign it with my name.

ISABEL DE SAN JERÓNIMO.

All that Sister Isabel de San Jerónimo has said concerning our venerable father Fray John of the Cross, almost all of us who are nuns in this convent have heard from her, and from other nuns, in particular from M. Ana de los Ángeles and M. Ana de la Madre de Dios, who have repeated it to us on several occasions. From these we have heard great praises of him, and he has been spoken of as a very holy person, of very great virtues, of which these nuns are well informed, since they have known him and had to do with him. And all the other persons whom we have heard speaking of him have done so in the belief and opinion that he is a saint, which is the common opinion and report. . . . He came to this convent only once, very soon after its foundation, when there were very few nuns here, and we cannot therefore speak of him in detail save from hearsay, but those who spoke of him have always said that his words had great effect and power in their souls and seemed to kindle them with fervour and love of God. This has also been the experience of those of us who did not know him save by his writings, for these produce a great effect and impression on those who read them, and not only upon ourselves, but also, as we have heard, upon other persons outside the Order who read them. This is what we know in common concerning this saint, and in witness of its truth we sign this with some of our names.

MARIANA DE JESÚS.

FRANCISCA DE LA MADRE DE DIOS.

MARIANA DE SAN ÁNGEL.

ISABEL DE JESÚS.

LUISA DEL NACIMIENTO.

FRANCISCA DE SAN ELISEO.

INÉS DE JESÚS.

MARIANA DE SAN ALBERTO

TERESA DE JESÚS MARÍA.

MARÍA DE JESÚS.

## V

LETTER BY M. CONSTANZA DE LA CRUZ<sup>1</sup>

Jesus Mary.

In fulfilment of the order which your Reverence gives me, I testify that on the morning when the holy Father left his prison (or, more correctly, when God took him thence) I was a novice at Toledo. I found him so greatly changed that he seemed fitter for the next life than for this. . . .

One morning, when we were at prayer, there was a knock at the door and a message was sent to the Mother Prioress that it was Fray John of the Cross. The Mother, who was very prudent, opened the door to him at once with the justification that he was needed to confess a sick nun. It made us all very sorry to see him in a very old black soutane, and so completely worn out that they dared give him nothing to eat, save a few stewed pears with cinnamon.

While Mass was being said, they took him to the church by the door which at that time we used when we went in to dress it. He showed such fervour when he began to speak of God and to describe the great trials which he had suffered that it was striking to hear him. He told us that he had been imprisoned for nine months and in great affliction of every kind; that he had had no light save what entered through a tiny hole in the wall, by which he could just read the Divine office, but, as the light was so poor, he could not sit down. Each Friday they took him to the refectory, where they gave him a very severe discipline. One Friday they failed to take him there and he said to the person whose business it was to take him: 'Brother, why have I been deprived of my deserts?' He caused such great edification that from that time onward they had a little pity on him.

Among other things he got them to bring him a clean tunic. With regard to this, I am not sure that he did not tell us that he only changed his tunic on that one occasion during all those nine months.

His escape from prison came about in this way, according to his own description. He asked his gaoler, who had given him a clean tunic, to bring him the necessary things for mending his clothes. When he

<sup>1</sup> N.L.M., M.S. 12,738, fol. 823. Constanza de la Cruz, professed in the convent of the Discalced nuns at Toledo in 1579, afterwards went to the new foundation of Villanueva de la Jara, where she wrote this letter.

found that he had scissors and thread, as His Majesty had ordained, he took his bedlinen, which must have been very poor, cut it into strips and sewed the strips together, and thus, though he knew not the height of the corridors, he had sufficient material to escape. On the night when he was to escape from prison, his cell was bolted as on every other night. But when they bolted it God inspired him to insert his finger, and thus it was not secured. Everything throughout bore the clear trace of Our Lord's intention to set him free. He commended himself to His Majesty, and, after Matins, when the friars were all at rest, he left his room with the bundle of strips, passing the room wherein was sleeping that very severe superior, Tostado. He had a lighted lamp, but God in His goodness was so favourable to him that nobody woke and perceived it. He knotted the strips of linen, so as to be able to make use of them in his descent, and, when he was at the bottom, he found himself in the greatest difficulty of all, for he discovered that he was in the enclosed courtyard of a convent of nuns. He said afterwards that he was about to throw himself upon their mercy, and could think of no other remedy, for the wall was high and its surface quite smooth. He commended himself very earnestly to the Mother of God; and it seemed to him that she raised him up and gave him strength to get over the wall. When he got down into the street, God helped him further. I do not remember how He did this, but, having done so much for him, He would not fail to do the rest.

Returning to what I said about his entry into our Toledo convent, the Calced friars arrived to ask with all due discretion if a Father of the Order was there called Fray John of the Cross. The portress, who had even more discretion than they, answered them excellently, without lying, but leaving them puzzled as to whether the nuns had seen any religious. This portress was Sister San Jerónimo, whom your Reverence knows well; she was taken to Cuerva to M. Ana de los Ángeles and is a sister of the white veil. All that day the Calced waited around our convent.

The Saint was with us at the grille of the church speaking very sublimely of Our Lord and of a work upon the Most Holy Trinity which he had composed in his prison, so that it was a heavenly joy to hear him. As night was approaching, the good Mother Ana de los Ángeles, being very zealous and prudent in all things concerning honesty of life, said that she thought it not lawful to him to spend the night there, even in the church, and that she would arrange for a trustworthy gentleman to come, from whom all the Calced together would

not take him away. So she sent for Don Pedro González de Mendoza, a leading Canon of Toledo Cathedral, who also held other high offices; he was the uncle of Don Pedro Laso, who is still living.

This gentleman brought his carriage and they gave him some clerical garments, and all went so well that, after a few days, this worthy gentleman sent him to Almodóvar del Campo.

As I was a novice, I was living apart from the other nuns, and so I do not repeat many things which others might say about the holy Father, as I am not sure of them. M. María de Jesús, who was Prioress at Toledo, and is now here (for we were novices together and came from Molina), will perhaps be able to remember better than I. Also Teresa de la Concepción, a sister who has taken the white veil, and who at that time was the infirmarian and gave the holy Father that meal which I described, with all the rest who are still living, such as M. Leonor de Jesús at Beas, and M. Francisca de San Eliseo at Sabiote. These were older than I and will know more of what happened.

One more thing I have remembered which the holy Father said—namely, that he had so little to eat that he thought they were trying to bring his life more quickly to an end and that he felt in himself that his vitality was leaving him. It has also occurred to me that M. María de los Mártires was there at the time and, with her great regard for truth, will be able to give a good account of it.

May Our Lord be held in reverence in all His works, for so He desires for the good of our souls.

May His Majesty keep your Reverence many years to His greater honour and glory and for the greater good of our holy Order.

Your Reverence's unworthy subject,

CONSTANZA DE LA CRUZ.

My fingers being as they are, I cannot write this with my own hand.<sup>1</sup>

## VI

### LETTER BY V. MARÍA DE JESÚS CONCERNING ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS<sup>2</sup>

This is what I know of the great virtues of our venerable father Fray John of the Cross, whom I knew and saw many times and in

<sup>1</sup> This line and the signature are in the hand of the author of the letter.

<sup>2</sup> An autograph letter, N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 817. The writer professed at Toledo in 1578.

whom I always recognized great sanctity and a truly celestial spirit. He taught great self-denial and mortification and detachment from all things, even from the wholly spiritual, and he led souls into great resignation to the Divine will and taught them to aim at the greatest perfection. This is what I knew and saw concerning him.

After the Calced friars had imprisoned him in their Carmel and he had escaped from that imprisonment, he himself related to us the great trials which he had suffered there and the severity with which those holy friars had treated him; he said that they had grieved him greatly and caused him great humiliation and mortification by what they had said to him. Some of this he repeated to us but I cannot remember it in detail, except that they enjoined upon him that he must never return to the Discalced. They took his Discalced habit from him and gave him a habit of the Calced, and they imprisoned him with such rigour that he had no light by which to say the Divine office save a small skylight in the roof of the cell in which he was imprisoned.

The food they gave him was very bad, and on Fridays they took him to the refectory, with bare shoulders, where they recited his faults to him—namely, that he had gone over to the Discalced and had founded new convents according to the Reform and other things of this kind—and they gave him very severe disciplines, in which all the friars took part, and mortified him greatly, giving him bread and water and afterwards sending him back to his prison.

He said that all this made him greatly contented; and that Our Lord showed him many favours during this period, by communicating Himself to him with great consolations; and that he said not a word to these friars, notwithstanding all that they were doing to him. He declared that his great grief was that our holy Mother and the Discalced brethren knew nothing about him, for nobody knew where the Calced friars were keeping him, although our Mother and all the religious were making great efforts to discover this. He was also very anxious and troubled lest the houses of the Discalced should be abolished, as they told him in the prison would happen; but he said to us that he had confidence throughout that nothing of the kind would come to pass.

He told us that he grew so ill and weak that he thought he was dying, and that, while he was in this state, during the octave of Our Lady of the Assumption, she appeared to him and told him to leave the prison, the doors of which were open at night on account of the great heat, but he feared to do so on account of his weak condition, which made

it impossible for him to escape save with the greatest difficulty. Nevertheless, he said, she returned to him frequently and told him to go, saying that she would aid him. At last, he told us, he could resist no longer, and determined to leave the prison, letting himself down through a very high window by means of his bedclothes which he tied together so as to be able to descend by them. When he was on the ground, he said, he found himself in a courtyard of a convent of nuns; he had fallen on some great stones and was sorely bruised. But Our Lady set him free and he came to no harm, though he said that, when he found himself in such straits, he thought he must be the weariest man in the world. It was impossible for him, by his own natural strength, to get out of the courtyard into which he had come down, for the walls were very high and he was so weak and ill that he felt he was at death's door.

Now he was greatly troubled, he continued, for it would have been a great trial if the friars had found him there on the next morning. So he commended himself often to Our Lord and to His most holy Mother and said he thought it must have been by their aid that he found himself outside the walls; it seemed to him that Our Lady had helped him to surmount them and that it had been a miracle. He then came here and we brought him into the convent to hear the confession of a nun who was very ill, and in this way the Lord delivered him; for friars and alguaciles came at once to seek him and surrounded the house; but the Superior sent for a Canon of the Cathedral and let him out of the convent by the door which we used for going into the church. The Canon was Treasurer of the Cathedral and a very important person, called Don Pedro González de Mendoza; he went into the church and took our Father into his carriage and drove him home secretly, gave him clerical clothes and sent him to Almodóvar, thus garbed, with many precautions. And one of the men who took him there said, when he came back, that he did not know who that cleric could be who emitted the odour of sanctity. . . .

Of this, and no more, I am certain; and because it is the truth I sign it with my name.

MARÍA DE JESÚS.

## VII

LETTER BY FRAY BERNARDO DE LOS REYES (VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA,  
APRIL 10, 1614)<sup>1</sup>

Jesus.

In fulfilment of the command given by our father, Fray Gabriel de Cristo, Provincial of the Province of our father San Angelo, in the Discalced Carmelite Order, which instructs every religious to state what he knows with respect to the life and sanctity of our father, Fray John of the Cross, religious of the said Order, I state that I knew him for a long period, both when I was in the world and since being in religion, and I was under him in the Order. Since that time I have always heard much good spoken by all of his virtue and sanctity, and on all the occasions which presented themselves of speaking about the said Father I never remember having heard aught but praise of his great virtues, which were well known to all, and this both during his life and after his death. . . . For myself, during the whole time I knew him, I saw a simple, sincere, unaffected sanctity; he spoke of spiritual things with such readiness that one would think he had them prepared; and he needed no material for this, but in speaking of any small thing—even of a trifle—he would soar in his discourse so that he carried us away with him and we listened to him with such delight that none of us ventured to speak until he had finished. He often spoke in this way during recreation. In all the time that I knew him I saw nothing in his conduct worthy of reproof nor observed in him any imperfection. He was full of charity, especially with the sick; he was very sympathetic to all; he had a rare prudence and the gentlest way of government; he had also the gift of discernment of spirits. I was with him at Lisbon, for a Chapter General, and observed that all the religious went on one day or another to see the nun who had the famous marks of wounds on her body, and made great efforts, not only to see her but also to obtain relics of her; for she had a great reputation, both among learned men and among spiritual persons. But it was impossible to persuade the said father, Fray John of the Cross, either to go to see her or to approve such conduct in a woman; indeed, I heard him say that the religious in our house did ill in going to see her. I have heard that, at the time of the foundation of our Reform, the Calced fathers persecuted him greatly, and I know that he met with great

<sup>1</sup> An autograph document, N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 1,029.

opposition among ourselves, especially a short time before his death. This is what I know, and I therefore sign it with my name at Vélez, on this tenth day of April, 1614.

FRAY BERNARDO DE LOS REYES.

## VIII

LETTER BY V. MARÍA DE JESÚS (LERMA, APRIL 11, 1614)<sup>1</sup>

Jesus Mary.

What I can remember having heard of our father Fray John of the Cross I think I heard from M. Ana de Jesús, now in Flanders, who had a great deal to do with him. When he was quite young, he heard the call to enter the religious life, and he was doubtful about the choice of an Order, because he desired to enter one in which the Rule was very much relaxed, so that he might do his utmost to reform it, for he thought that by so doing he would render a great service to Our Lord. So he went from one religious house to another to see in which the Rule was least severe; and as at that time a Carmelite house had been founded in the village where he was staying, and he must have seen some mismanagement, as the foundation was not yet properly established, this seemed to him the Order which he was seeking, and accordingly he took the habit in it. Later, whether because he saw that he could not endure it, or because Our Lord had not yet revealed to him how it was to be reformed, he was about to go to the Carthusian Order when our holy Mother, Teresa of Jesus, heard of him. He now began a life of great penitence, prayer and strictness in the observance of the Rule, and thus, though he was so young, he was respected by the oldest, who were careful not to commit faults in his presence. If they were talking together at a time when it was forbidden they would say when they caught sight of him in the distance: 'Fray John is coming,' and would go away. He had a cell with a little window overlooking the church, where he spent a great part of the night in prayer. Once when he was looking through this window he observed something which showed him that a grave offence to Our Lord was about to be committed. He went to the friar who knew about this, and, though he was very young and this friar was of mature years and held a post of confidence in the convent, he reproved him with dignity and told him to see to it then and there that this was not done or he would go

<sup>1</sup> An autograph letter, N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 911.

and tell the Prior. And the other friar did as he said. Among other trials which the holy Father suffered at the time of the separation of the Discalced province, the Calced fathers imprisoned him for some time (I believe it was eight months) in a very narrow prison, where he suffered severe penalties and was very frequently taken to the refectory to receive discipline—I fancy it was every third day approximately. He was fed badly and treated very severely. A friar had pity on him and arranged for the prison door to be left open one night so that he escaped and began to climb from one roof to another and so reached the street. As it was night he could not see the place into which he was coming down and he entered the courtyard or garden of a convent of nuns. When it began to get light he realized where he was and became greatly afflicted; so he betook himself to prayer, and, without knowing how, found himself in the street.

As he was making a journey by night, he fell from a high precipice, and, as he did so, he felt as if someone was sustaining him in the air so that, by clutching some plants, he was able to save himself. At this same time M. Ana de Jesús was at prayer and it was suddenly represented to her that Fray John of the Cross was in great peril and with great emotion she commended him to God. A few days afterwards, the Father reached the place where she was and she asked him what had happened to him during the journey and if he had found himself in any great trial or peril. 'Why do you ask?' he said. She answered by telling him what had happened to her while she was at prayer and the day and the hour of it. 'Then it was you who were sustaining me?' he said, and told her what had happened to him.

I have also heard (though I cannot remember from whom) that, when the said Father was concerned with the spiritual progress of a nun belonging to another Order, he went several times to confess her, and the devil, anxious to sow his tares, assumed Fray John's figure and habit, and went to the convent to ask for the nun, and they duly sent for her. When he was with her in the confessional or locutory, Fray John came to ask that she should be sent for. 'But it is no time,' said the portress, 'since your Reverence sent for her and she went into the locutory!' He understood what had happened and went and found the devil talking with her, but I have such a bad memory that I cannot properly recall the rest of what happened. I think he ordered the devil to say who he was, because otherwise the nun would not believe what he had said.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This incident is said to have happened in the convent of Augustinian nuns at Ávila.

I also heard that, when he wrote a book expounding several passages from the Songs, he dealt with that subject very reverently, writing it all upon his knees.

In our Segovia convent I heard it said that he had warned the Mother Prioress of that convent to take great care with a certain nun, for she would lose her reason; and so it came to pass, though the prophecy must have been made more than ten years earlier. I do not remember the exact words in which he said this. I also heard that at the end of his life he was very ill, and among other illnesses, had certain wounds; and that the surgeon took off some of the bandages which were covering these and with them cured other sick persons by applying them to them. In general, on almost every occasion that I have heard anything of the Father, it has been in high praise of his great virtue and religious character and I have never heard anything about him that contradicts this.

Thus I sign this letter on this eleventh day of April, 1614, in this convent of the Mother of God at Lerma.

MARÍA DE JESÚS.

## IX

LETTER BY FRAY DIEGO DE LA ENCARNACIÓN (SEGOVIA,  
APRIL 26, 1614)<sup>1</sup>

Jesus Mary.

In fulfilment of the command given by our Father Provincial, Fray Luis de la Madre de Dios, to state what I know with respect to the virtue and sanctity of our father Fray John of the Cross, the first man to take our Discalced habit, I say as follows:

First, in the thirty-six years, approximately speaking, that I have spent in religion, I have always observed that the whole Order has held and esteemed the said Father to be one of the holiest, most exemplary and most virtuous of religious who have belonged to it—I might even say the holiest of them all. He was the most perfect example of every kind of virtue, especially that of charity towards his neighbour, for he succoured others in all the necessities that they presented to him, whether spiritual or bodily, with all solicitude and care, according as their state and profession allowed. He was particularly attentive to

<sup>1</sup> An autograph document, N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 889.

the needs of those who were under him, loving them and helping them in every fit manner, so that, at the same time as he corrected and amended their faults, he encouraged and persuaded them to a better observance of the law of God and of their essential vows and of the Rule and Constitutions of the Order. Yet, rigorous and meticulous as he was in this, he was nevertheless greatly loved by those whom he ruled, to such an extent that anyone who had ever experienced his company sought it always.

He was marvellous in his practice of prayer and contemplation—I believe that in this respect he was the loftiest and most fervent religious known to our time, as is witnessed by certain treatises concerning this virtue which he left for our edification and instruction. One of these is called the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and another the *Dark Night of the Soul*. From these and others may be deduced how this servant of God reached the highest degree of prayer and contemplation which a soul can attain in this life.

From these treatises may also be inferred the severity of the mortification which he practised, both within and without, and the great annihilation and contempt which he had for himself, together with the extreme poverty of spirit which, one would think, could hardly be greater in any soul still living this life.

It may also be inferred what a great spiritual master he was and what deep experience he had in the spiritual life. He had the gift of discernment of spirits and of giving light and guidance to souls walking here below. They came to him from many parts and were ruled and governed by his opinion, holding and esteeming him as a Divine oracle. He was a great penitent: not content with performing the things commanded by our Rule and Constitutions, which are considerable, he added many more to them.

But the virtue which shone most brightly in him was that of patience, for he suffered many of the gravest persecutions innocently, bearing them with great conformity and resignation to the will of God, without defending or excusing himself or complaining of his persecutors; he likewise suffered the gravest illnesses and indispositions of the body. It would be a very long tale to relate his virtues in detail; this I leave to others.

One thing I will not fail to mention, small though it is, since I was an eye-witness of it and was greatly edified by it. One day, at the time when this Father was Definitor of the Order, he arrived at a priory where I was living after Compline had been said; he was very tired and

in great need of rest and refreshment, for it was a period of great heat. The religious went out to receive his blessing, since he was the father of them all and their superior in the Order. But the Prior had some scruple about their talking with him after Compline had been said, and, in some agitation, began to point out to them that, whoever the visitor might be, he could not allow it. Our father, Fray John of the Cross, without speaking a word to him or showing any annoyance, either before or afterwards, retired at once, though he was the Prior's superior, being Definitor, and though it was but a little time since the Prior had been a novice under him.

After our Father had been superior in our convent of Segovia, I went as superior to the same convent, and found in his rule there much to imitate. By his example and virtue he had caused great edification in virtue and good living, not only in the convent but also among those in the world who had much to do with him; for all with whom he spoke remained greatly affected by all the good that they saw in him, and enkindled in the love of God and desire to serve him. It is as if this Father were a burning torch who not only enkindled all the hearts of those with whom he had to do but also prepared them to burn with love themselves. . . .

All this is well known and commonly reported, not only within the Order but also among those in the world. This I say in fulfilment of this command and I have signed it on the twenty-sixth day of April, 1614.

FRAY DIEGO DE LA ENCARNACIÓN.

## X

LETTER BY MARÍA DE LA ENCARNACIÓN (OCTOBER 30, 1614)<sup>1</sup>

Jesus Mary.

In order to comply with obedience and the command which your Reverence has given us to relate what we know and have heard of the virtues and sanctity of our venerable and holy father Fray John of the Cross, I relate to the honour and glory of Our Lord and in praise of that faithful servant of his, that I, wretched and miserable as I am, had the privilege of knowing him, that I made my confession to him several times and had to do with him here in Madrid, where he came with M. Ana de Jesús to the foundation of our nuns there, where I

<sup>1</sup> An autograph letter, N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 827.

afterwards took the habit. Whensoever he confessed and communicated me, I felt a great benefit in my soul, for his words had great power and he spoke in a most lofty manner of the love of God and of prayer and contemplation. He could speak of nothing else, and his words were so gracious that they remained in the souls of the hearers, and enkindled in them the fire of the love of God. It always seemed that his soul was at prayer. I can bear witness that Her Majesty the Empress<sup>1</sup> (whom may God have in His glory) was greatly devoted to him and honoured and esteemed him as a saint and read his books and treatises which deal with the loftiest prayer and contemplation and with the love of God. I repeat that Her Majesty read them with great pleasure and devotion and said that in all her life she had never read or heard things so devout or sublime.

I heard the Father himself say that he had written these treatises on prayer in his prison—the Toledo convent where the Calced fathers kept him many days, at the beginning of his career, when the reform of our holy Order had just begun. Here they ill-treated him and persecuted him sorely on account of the reforms which he had made and of his having left them.

He suffered many trials and much ill-treatment in prison, as my holy Mother María del Nacimiento can effectively witness. At that time this Mother was in the Toledo house; later she went to the Madrid foundation, where she became sub-prioress, and had charge of the novices; I was under her there and often heard her speak of the great trials which this holy man had suffered. When God set him free from his prison, he went to the convent of the Toledo nuns, and he was so emaciated and weak on account of the hunger which he had been forced to endure in prison, with other kinds of ill-treatment, that they hardly knew him, nor could he talk to them; it seemed that he was at death's door.

I heard him tell this same Mother that he had endured these trials, and others, and the illnesses which he had suffered, with great patience and joyfulness of soul, for the love of God. When he was in Madrid, he often came to our convent to hear our confessions, and so, on two or three occasions, I heard him describe all this; he would say that his soul had never been more contented nor had he ever rejoiced in the sweetness and light of Our Lord as during that long period when he was in that prison. It was very gloomy and dark, he said, so that hardly

<sup>1</sup> When she first met the Saint the writer was in the service of María, consort of Maximilian II, Emperor of Germany, Philip II's sister.

sufficient light entered it for reading, but Our Lord provided for him, for through a very small opening there came a ray of sunlight, which consoled him, and by which he was able to write the exposition of those spiritual stanzas which he composed, beginning :

Upon a darksome night,  
Kindling with love in flame of yearning keen  
—O moment of delight!—  
I went, by all unseen,  
New-hush'd to rest the house where I had been.

This poem treats in a most lofty way of the intimate communication, contemplation and union of the soul with God and of His Divine love.

Often, too, I heard M. Ana de Jesús and M. María del Nacimiento (may God rest her soul!) relate of our holy Mother Teresa of Jesus, that she greatly esteemed and loved this venerable Father and was for a long time his penitent, and said of him that she loved him tenderly, since his soul was most sincere and pure, and he was a man without craft or malice, and practised the loftiest contemplation and lived in the greatest peace. What I can say with great truth is that, whenever I saw him and spoke with him, his expression and demeanour were like those of an angel from Heaven and he seemed to be in prayer and in the presence of the Lord. He had a peaceful and holy joy, and there shone in him charity, humility, meekness and a grave and religious modesty. . . .

Our holy Mother Teresa of Jesus has left much information about this holy man in her *Foundations*, where she describes at length his call to our Order, and relates how he was proposing to become a Carthusian, and also describes his great virtue and religious character. If M. Ana de Jesús is alive, she can say much of this venerable Father, for she knew him for a long time at Beas and he went with her to the foundations at Granada and Madrid; and I understand that she knows much about him, and can go into great detail. At Talavera, too, there is a nun who has taken the white veil, called Ana de Jesús, who is a daughter of the Granada convent and knew and saw much of this holy man both there and in Madrid. When we were together in the Madrid convent, I heard this sister relate many things of the sanctity and virtue of our venerable father Fray John of the Cross. If she is not dead, she will relate these better than I, for I have a poor memory and do not recall things well.

Both from those whom I have here named and from many other persons who knew this holy Father, your Reverence may learn much of his great and heroic virtues and sanctity; and, since all that is here written is the strictest truth, I sign it with my name, on this day of the glorious and holy Father Serapion, the thirtieth day of October of this year 1614, in this convent of our Father Saint Joseph of Consuegra.

MARÍA DE LA ENCARNACIÓN.<sup>1</sup>

## XI

LETTER BY ISABEL DE JESÚS MARÍA (CUERVA,  
NOVEMBER 2, 1614)<sup>2</sup>

Jesus Mary.

The virtues and sanctity of our father Fray John of the Cross were very great and in particular there shone forth in him a marvellous meekness and patience in the great trials which he suffered during his life, especially at the time of the separation of our province in the year 1580. The Calced fathers kept him imprisoned in their Carmel at Toledo, and dealt him the greatest affliction and the harshest treatment, so that he felt himself to be at the point of death and determined to escape. Herein he was miraculously aided by Our Lord and His most holy Mother. He let himself down from his prison by a window, tearing up the sheets from his bed and making ropes of them, and by this means lowering himself from a great height. When he came to the ground he found himself in an enclosed space from which it was impossible for him to escape on account of the great height of the walls; finding himself in such affliction and with no human remedy, he was about to cry out to the friars themselves to have mercy on him and take him back to his prison. But Our Lord came to his help, and, without knowing how, he found himself in the street outside that enclosure.

At dawn he arrived at our convent of Discalced nuns in Toledo. His natural strength and energy were exhausted, what with his perturbation and the trials of his prison, so that he could scarcely speak to the portress. But he begged her with great humility to succour him speedily as he believed they were coming after him.

<sup>1</sup> In a long postscript the writer apologizes for the 'bad style' of the letter and begs for a blessing.

<sup>2</sup> An autograph letter, N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 835.

The prioress of that time, M. Ana de los Ángeles, was greatly confused, and could not think what she could do to help him in this peril. It so pleased Our Lord, however, that a nun who was ill in bed should say that she needed to make her confession, and ask that this Father should come and confess her. He did so, and afterwards, with great secrecy, he went into the convent church, where he hid for some hours, until the Mother Prioress sent for Don Pedro González de Mendoza, Canon of the Cathedral of Toledo, and uncle of the Count of Arcos. He took the Father in his carriage, brought him to a safe place and afterwards sent him to a convent of Discalced friars of the Order. The servant who accompanied him, when he returned, asked the nuns what friar was this, for there came from him a celestial fragrance.

I remember, too, that at the time when we had him hidden in the church, he recited some verses which he had composed and had in his head and a nun wrote them down. There are three of them, all treating of the Most Holy Trinity, so lofty and devout that they seemed to kindle fire. We have them in this convent of Cuerva. They begin :

Far away in the beginning  
Dwelt the Word in God Most High.

This happened when I was a novice at Toledo.

The works and writings of this Father are held in the greatest honour and esteem ; I have heard it said, both of his works and of his words, that they enkindled with celestial fire, and this I have also myself experienced. His works are so spiritual and so greatly esteemed that they are kept and preserved as a precious treasure, and no person's entreaties can prevail for them to be taken out. The Count of Arcos has in great esteem some *liras* or lyric poems by this Father, with a gloss or exposition to each stanza, a most delicate and spiritual work, beginning : 'Whither hast vanished?'

During the time that Our Lord entrusted this holy man with the duty of government, he exercised his office with great rectitude, charity and prudence, as may be seen in the letters and the order which he sent to our Mother Ana de los Ángeles, when she was prioress. I understand that he acted with equal prudence on all other occasions and I have never heard anything to the contrary, but always that in the religious life, in prayer and in patience, he was admirable. . . .

This is what I know of that great religious, at first hand and from the testimony of persons who had some acquaintance with his life.

But what I have said is nothing compared with what remains to be said about his great sanctity. I hold him as a saint. And in witness to the truth of this I sign it with my name, at Cuerva, on this second day of November in the year 1614.

ISABEL DE JESÚS MARÍA.

## XII

LETTER BY MARÍA DEL SACRAMENTO (CARAVACA,  
NOVEMBER 7, 1614)

Jesus Mary.

In fulfilment of the order given us by your Reverence to say what we know of the virtues of our father Fray John of the Cross, I testify that, since he first came to this part of the country as Rector at Baeza, more than thirty-fours years ago, we have all recognized that he was a man of great holiness and of most sublime spirituality in the things of God, together with a particular gift of prayer, and a great talent for leading souls into the way of prayer.

At that time, I heard him say that he sometimes abstained from saying Mass for some days in order to avoid the burden of devotion, and that the result of this had been different from his expectations, for the mercies which God then showed him were much greater. Speaking wittily of this he said: 'Our Lord is really quite embarrassing'; by which he indicated how great are the favours which His Majesty shows to those to whom He communicates Himself.

All the sufferings which came to him he bore with the patience and perfection of a true saint; he was the first man to pass from the Mitigated Rule of our Order to the Primitive Rule. When the Calced fathers had him in their power, they ill-treated him greatly, shutting him up in a foul little cell, where he could get only enough light to say the Divine Office by standing on a stone. When they could not bring him to their way of thinking by any other means, they took him from his cell to the refectory to give him disciplines. But the door of the prison was left open and he succeeded in returning to the Discalced, in great peril of his life, passing through gates and over walls. He told us that in that cell he had composed what he wrote about the Book of the Songs, the Most Holy Trinity and the Psalm *Super flumina Babilonis*.

He grieved greatly for the trials suffered by Father Gracián, which was natural, as he also shared them.

A short time before they took away the habit from Father Gracián, he wrote to M. Ana de San Alberto, who lives in this convent, saying: 'Daughter, God has permitted these times to come upon us in order to prove His elect. In silence and hope shall be our strength.' I heard Fray Agustín de los Reyes, who was Provincial of Andalusia and is now dead, say that the persecutions suffered by Fray John of the Cross were worse than those of Father Gracián, for he had himself witnessed them. These were the very words of the said Father.

I heard Fray Gabriel de Cristo, now Provincial of Andalusia, when he held the same office previously, speak of the patience and obedience of our blessed Father. When he was at Úbeda, he said, in the early days of the sickness of which he died, he felt unable to go to the refectory, and sent to ask the Prior to excuse him, which he refused to do, and sent commanding him sternly to go. With all humility he obeyed and went. This Prior had been under the blessed Father and had received the greatest kindness from him. I heard the same Father Provincial say that our father Fray John had proved himself, in one thing that he had said, to have the spirit of prophecy. When he was making a hurried journey he was asked the reason for his haste, and replied that he was going to prevent someone who would upset the Order from making his profession. When he arrived, the profession had already been made and events showed that he had spoken the truth.

I also heard one of our friars (I think it was Fray Cristóbal de San Alberto, at his death Prior of Manzanares), say that our Father was in Portugal at the time when the nun of the Anunciada was held in such great esteem for her supposed sanctity. Some of the religious suggested to him that he should go to see her. He replied that he had no desire to do so. Father Mariano answered: 'Come, go and see her, for her superiors are proposing to enclose her!' The blessed Father answered: 'They ought to have done so already, for God will reveal her impostures.' And this turned out and happened as he had said.

I also heard this same friar say that, on the night of his death, he asked what hour it was, and that, when they told him, he said: 'We will go and say Matins in Heaven.' And in fact he died, just before midnight.

When he was Provincial here, and was saying Mass in our church, the said M. Ana de San Alberto saw him surrounded by a great light. Afterwards she asked him why he had spent so long over that Mass, and

he answered: 'Why do you ask, my daughter?' In telling her what had happened, he said: 'Our Lord has shown me so great a favour that, if He had not provided for me, I could not have received it. He told me to tell the Prioress to see that a convent of Discalced friars is founded here, and that He would be greatly pleased by this, and would assist it.' And His Majesty fulfilled His promise, for soon afterwards He put it into the heart of a devout cleric to come forward with substantial alms to buy the site; and everything favoured it, and M. Ana de San Alberto, the Prioress, with the other nuns of this convent, gave them two hundred ducats, although we had still a great deal to do ourselves which was very necessary.

When I heard something about its being the will of God that this foundation should be made, I persuaded the said Mother to tell me in detail what had happened, as far as she knew it, and she related to me what I have written. . . .

I now recall a phrase of his teaching which I heard myself and which is worthy always to be kept in remembrance. 'The smallest anxiety of the soul is ill-bestowed if it have not to do with God.'

May His Majesty keep your Reverence many years to do Him such services as these in furthering the honour of His servants, who merit it likewise. At Caravaca, in this convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns, dedicated to the glorious Saint Joseph, on the seventh day of November, 1614.

MARÍA DEL SACRAMENTO.

*To our father Fray Alonso de Jesús María, Provincial of the Discalced Carmelites of the Province of the Holy Spirit, whom may Our Lord preserve.*

### XIII

#### ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF THE SAINT BY FRAY JUAN EVANGELISTA, PRIOR OF CARAVACA<sup>1</sup>

In obedience to the command of our Father Definitor-in-chief and of the Fathers Definitors of the Consulta, concerning the enquiry into the virtues and holiness of the deceased religious of our Order, I write as follows:

First, I state that I knew our father Fray John of the Cross and lived and travelled with him for eleven years. He was a native of Fontiveros.

<sup>1</sup> An autograph document, N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 559.

He died at Úbeda and his body lies in the convent of Segovia. I recognized the great virtue and religious character of this holy man. I knew him when he was Rector at Baeza, twice Prior of Granada, Vicar Provincial of these two provinces and Definitor-in-chief of the Consulta. These offices, as I observed, he discharged in a most holy and exemplary manner all the time that I had to do with him. He was given to retirement from the world and had very little communication with persons in the world, only such as was necessary. He was greatly opposed to religious having to do with persons in the world; he very seldom entered their houses and that only when it was necessary to do so.

He was a man of great penitence, and, despite his frequent attacks of ill-health, he often did penance and had a great desire for it. Once, when I was walking with him, I saw that, next to his flesh, he was wearing drawers made of knotted rope. I asked him why he was wearing these and begged him to take them off at least during his journey. 'Son,' he answered, 'it is relaxation enough to go on horseback; we must not take our ease all the time.'

I often heard him speak of the persecutions and trials which he had suffered at the beginning of his career and of how the Calced Fathers had kept him in prison for nine months, giving him the discipline every Friday, and, as food, bread and water. I can testify that his shoulders were so sore that on one day he could not bear the serge of his habit and I believe he told me that it was due to this.

He was a man of the deepest prayer, to which, as will be seen from his books, he was greatly affectioned. I saw him write these books and I never saw him open a book in order to write them. He relied upon his communion with God, and it can be clearly seen that they are all the result of experience and practice and that he had personal experience of the subject of his writings. I saw a number of things which have to do with his prayer and communion with God. On one occasion I entered his cell and found him as it were in a trance. 'Father,' I said to him, 'what is the matter with your Reverence?' 'Son,' he answered, 'I must have been asleep.' But it seemed to me that this was no way to sleep and I put the question to him again and urged him to tell me what had happened to him. Then he answered me: 'See that this is never told to anyone' (I was at that time his confessor). This happened in Segovia, when he was Definitor-in-chief. I gave him my word and he then said to me: 'I think I was enraptured; I saw certain friars of ours in a great trial and I cried to them to go away from where

they were, but they would not; then I saw that they had all perished.' I testify that on several occasions I heard him advise those religious to do what seemed fitting and they would never listen to him, and a little while afterwards I saw that what the holy Father said to me had happened to them.

On another occasion, when he was Vicar Provincial, the Father Provincial, Fray Nicolás de Jesús María, gave him a piece of work which we went to perform together. The city opposed this, but he said that he was bound to do it because it was the express command of his superior. They insisted that it was not to be done; whereupon, seeing himself in difficulties, and unable to refrain from doing the thing because it was a command, he said to me: 'Let us ask the help of God and we will see what is His will.' He said Mass (it was the day of Saint Martin, Bishop, to whom he had great devotion) and he prayed. When he had finished, he said to me: 'We can safely go away, for that is God's will.' Then I knew that he was acting from obedience. Similar things happened on many other occasions.

He was extremely fond of solitude and in it consisted his greatest pleasure. When he had any work to do he always went among the rocks. One day I said to him: 'Heaven help us! Your Reverence is always among the rocks!' 'Do not be surprised at that, son,' he replied; 'when I am among the rocks I have less to confess than when I am among men.'

He was very fond of reading in the Scriptures, and I never once saw him read any other books than the Bible (almost all of which he knew by heart), Saint Augustine *Contra Hæreses*, and the *Flos Sanctorum*. When occasionally he preached (which was seldom), or gave informal addresses, as he more commonly did, he never read from any book save the Bible. His conversation, whether at recreation or at other times, was continually of God; and he spoke so delightfully that, when he discoursed upon the things of God at recreation, he would make us all laugh, and we used greatly to enjoy going out. On occasions when we held chapters, at night after supper he would usually give devotional addresses; and he never failed to give an address every night. He had a great gift of resignation and had great trust in God's mercy with regard to the maintenance of his friars, and so he never wished the friars to go out to beg for alms. He would say as a rule that we should serve God and do our duty, and in that way we should oblige God to do what He had promised. He often said that, once a friar holds himself of no account, he lacks nothing, and that,

if we would only cease to be anxious about ourselves, God would succour us without fail.

It once happened, when I was his procurator, that one day there was nothing in the house to eat but a few herbs, and I went to ask leave of him to go and look for something to eat. 'God help us, son!' he said to me. 'Are we to have no patience when there is no food for a single day, especially if God wishes to prove our virtue? Go, desist from this intention and betake yourself to your cell, where you can commend this need to Our Lord.' I went away, but after a short time returned, reminding him that some of the friars were sick and it would be reasonable to attend to them. He answered me again that I had little confidence in God, and that, if I were a good friar, I could plead with God for these things from my cell. Thereupon I went away in some embarrassment, but, seeing that there was really great necessity and having respect for the feelings of the friars, I returned to him and said: 'Father Prior, this is tempting Our Lord, Whose will it is that we do what we can for ourselves. Give me leave to go and look for food to-day.' Then he smiled and said: 'Go, and take a companion, and you will see how quickly God will confound you because of your little faith.' So I went out, and just outside the door I met a municipal officer called Bravo. 'Where is your Reverence going?' he said to me. I told him that I was going to look for food. 'Wait,' he answered, 'I will give you this money which has been paid to the alcaldes and magistrates as fines.' Then he gave me twelve doubloons or golden crowns—I forget which. I was very glad, on the one hand, as I could now meet our need, but on the other hand, I felt very keenly what the holy Father had said to me. I went back into the house in great embarrassment, and when he saw me, he said: 'How much greater glory you would have had if you had remained in your cell; for God would have sent what was necessary without all that begging to go out. Learn, son, to trust God.' Several other things of this kind happened. On various occasions, when we were in need, certain persons asked him why he did not visit important people, for they would give him alms. He generally answered: 'If they are more likely to give these alms because I visit them, I will not be the occasion of such a base end and motive. If they are likely to give alms for the love of God He will move them to do so.'

This holy man was poor in the extreme. I never knew him have anything of his own—not even a notebook, or anything else, nor an image nor a cross save that which was in his cell. He once had a

small and very good portrait of the holy Mother, which he said was an excellent likeness of her, and he gave it away so as to have nothing.

He was most patient in trials, and, however sore they were and however great the pains and sickness which he had to endure, he was never seen to complain. However much he was insulted, he never opened his mouth to say how badly he was being treated; nor did he find fault with anyone; and during the whole period that I knew him I never heard him utter a murmur, though he had a thousand reasons for doing so. He spoke well of all and in particular of his superiors, whom he held in high esteem and excused if ever the occasion offered; as to this I am qualified to witness. He was extremely charitable and full of compassion. He had a keen sense of the necessities and trials of his neighbours and endeavoured to succour them as often as he could.

He was most humble in his words and deeds. Sometimes he said to me: 'Son, pray God He grant me as a favour that I may die in the possession of no office and that in this life He may grant me purgatory.' He said the same to Fray Agustín de San José. Both these things Our Lord granted him, for when he died he held no office and he suffered the most terrible illness and the greatest pains imaginable. The physician told me that he had never attended anyone who had suffered such terrible pains, nor had he ever seen such patience, for no one heard him complain down to the time of his death. During this illness the Provincial, Fray Antonio de Jesús, said to him, 'Let us talk a while, Father Fray John of the Cross, of those trials of yours and the beginning of those persecutions.' 'My Father,' the Saint answered him, 'let me remember my sins, which are many; do not recall these other matters to me.' I think I never heard him speak of anything but poverty of spirit, renunciation and resignation. Practising these as he did, he was unable to speak of anything else.

Once, while he was living at La Peñuela, a large patch of waste ground caught fire. The fire spread as far as the convent and began to attack the twigs forming part of the fence of our grounds.<sup>1</sup> They told him that it might consume the Most Holy Sacrament, for it seemed to them impossible that the whole convent would not be burned. The holy Father prostrated himself in prayer and those who saw him say that he remained thus for some time praying to Our Lord with tears, and they observed that the fire did not spread beyond the fence.

A lady at Granada, called Doña Juana de Pedraza, told me several times that when the holy Father was in Segovia and she was in

<sup>1</sup> [It was a rough fence made of twigs and brushwood. Cf. p. 343, below.]

Granada (he had often confessed her—she is a very holy person) she wrote to him several times telling him of her trials and necessities; and that, on the same day as she wrote to him, he wrote to her also and his letter satisfied all her needs and answered all her questions. I have heard the same thing from M. Ana de San Alberto, who was formerly Prioress of this convent. His soul was like a temple of God supernaturally illumined, wherein were heard Divine oracles concerning the souls with whom he had to do.

On many occasions I observed the holy Father's great gift of discernment of spirits; he had only to talk to a person once and he would be familiar with his spirit and his method of prayer. He also had a great gift for exorcism, as on several occasions I had the opportunity of discovering. On one occasion, I remember that he was going to cast out a devil from the house of an important person, and, when he had gone away, the devil said: 'Alas, that I cannot vanquish this little friar, nor can I find any way of bringing about his fall! For years he has been persecuting me at Ávila, Torafe<sup>1</sup> and here!' I told this to the Father, but his only reply to what the devil had said about his sanctity was: 'Silence, son, and do not believe this devil, for all he says is lies.'

On the night of his death he kept asking very anxiously what hour it was. When they told him that it was eleven o'clock he said: 'Ah! at midnight we shall go and sing Matins in Heaven.' . . .

His life was honest in the extreme. He related to me how greatly a young girl had for some time been soliciting and persecuting him (when he was acting as confessor to the nuns at Ávila), and, seeing that she could do nothing with him, she went one night into the house where he was living through a courtyard which abutted on that of his house. Then she entered his room and urged and entreated him to hear her; but Our Lord helped him so that he persuaded her to leave the house and gained the victory. He often told me that he had never found himself in a more pressing situation, for she was a girl of good appearance and many good qualities, which made matters worse.<sup>2</sup>

This holy man was most restrained in demeanour; merely to look at him inspired spirituality; he seemed always to be at prayer. I observed many other virtues in this holy Father, but, as it is so long since his death, I cannot recall them. . . . This is the truth as to what I know and I have signed it with my name.

FRAY JUAN EVANGELISTA.

<sup>1</sup> Iznatoraf, a little town in the province of Jaén.

<sup>2</sup> [This story is told in greater detail on p. 343, below.]

## XIV

DEPOSITIONS OF FRAY JUAN EVANGELISTA CONCERNING  
THE SAINT<sup>1</sup>

That which Fray Juan Evangelista knows concerning the life of the holy father Fray John of the Cross is as follows:

First, he often heard it said that, both in the world and in general, the said father Fray John of the Cross was most virtuous, composed and recollected.

Further, he heard the holy Father say that, when he was a child, playing with other children, he fell into a deep well full of water, and, after he had sunk several times and risen to the surface again, they drew him out without any injury. He also heard him talk of the prison in which he had been for so long immured and of his many sufferings there; from his description of his escape from the prison it became clear that it was miraculous, though his humility forbade him to assert this, as also to say that Our Lady had helped him on this and other occasions; he was very modest in these things.

With regard to the theological virtues, this witness deposes that on many occasions he noted to what a high degree this holy Father possessed them. In the matter of the virtue of faith, he deposes that he was well practised therein, and this he observed both in actions of his which he noted and also in his words, for what he taught most of all was that we should live in faith and detachment from all created things, so that he would never be influenced by any personal experiences which might possibly have helped him. This is exemplified in the story of the Portuguese nun with the wounds. A Chapter of this Order was being held in Lisbon; this Father, who was then Prior at Granada, attended it, and all the members of the Chapter went to see these wounds. But they could not prevail upon him to go, for he said that he had no need to see them, as he thought it of more value to have faith in the wounds of Jesus Christ than in all created things, and for that reason he had no need to see anyone's wounds.

With regard to the virtue of hope, this witness says that he observed it shining greatly in this holy Father, for, during the eight or nine years that he lived with him, he took continual note that he lived in

<sup>1</sup> N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 981. This document appears to be an incomplete rough draft of a deposition prepared for the Beatification process. Though it repeats some of the testimony given in the last document, we reproduce it for the interest inherent in any statement by so close a companion of St. John of the Cross as P. Juan Evangelista.

hope and that hope sustained him. Of this he saw many examples, in particular when he was procurator of the priory at Granada, where the Saint was Prior. On one occasion among others, there was great need in the house, and when this witness went to the holy Father to ask leave of him to go out and get what was lacking, he said to him: 'Trust in God and have no fear that He will fail us.' Thereupon he desisted; but, after some time, seeing that it was getting late, this witness returned to the holy Father and told him it was late and there were sick persons in great need, and begged him to give leave to get what was necessary. The holy Father answered: 'Go to your cell and ask God to send what is needful, and trust in Him, and you will see that He will send it.' Thereupon he went away, but, seeing that nothing happened, he returned to the holy Father and said: 'Father, this is tempting God. Give me leave and I will go out and do what I can, for it is very late.' Then he said: 'Go, and you will see how God will confound you for your lack of faith and hope.' This witness went, but near the door of the church he found a municipal officer named Bravo, who asked him where he was going, and he answered that he was going out in search of food or of money to buy it. Then the officer said to him: 'I have here a sum of money which the Audiencia has voted.' And he gave him twelve crowns out of it. These he took and bought what was necessary, and when he returned to the holy Father very shamefacedly, he said to him: 'How much better would it have been if you had trusted in God, for He would have sent what you needed to your cell!' This witness saw other things of the same kind, as when the holy Father would enter the refectory and say grace, when there was nothing to eat; but his confidence was justified, for they always received something to eat within a short time. Because of this confidence which he had in God he would not consent that the friars in any convent where he held rule should go out to beg for alms, either of wheat or of aught else.

Further, this witness knows that the holy Father had that which is spoken of in the sixteenth question. He lived with him for many years, all the time in the same house, and shared his journeys and recreations. On these and other occasions he would always speak of God, and this witness listened to many of his spiritual addresses, on the most sublime subjects, all of them given extempore and without preparation. He never saw any books in his cell, save a Bible, a volume of Saint Augustine and a *Flos Sanctorum*, for he was most devoted to reading the lives of the saints.

Further, this witness observed in the holy Father a great purity of soul and body. The following is one example of this among others. He was at one time the confessor of some nuns in a certain place<sup>1</sup> and lived in a little house near their convent. A very handsome girl became attached to him, and, in order to attain her end, she made use of all possible means, none of which was of any avail. She therefore resolved upon a bold attempt against his honour and profession. One night she climbed over the fence into the little courtyard belonging to this house, and thence entered the holy Father's room, where he was alone at supper. When he saw her, he was astonished, and said that he supposed it to be the devil. Then, with his customary patience, he spoke to her about these things and made her realize her wickedness; so that she left the room and went back to her house. This witness heard this story from the mouth of the holy Father himself, who was accustomed to speak of it with great frankness. . . .

Further, when he was ill, he did such penance as he was able. This witness was once journeying with the holy Father and discovered in an inn some drawers of knotted rope which he had hidden. He asked him why he mortified himself so cruelly when he was so ill. 'Silence, son,' was the reply; 'it is luxury enough to go on horseback. We must not take our ease all the time. . . .'

## XV

AN ACCOUNT BY FRAY BARTOLOMÉ DE SAN  
BASILIO<sup>2</sup>

Being at Úbeda in the same year in which Fray John of the Cross died in the convent there, I learned that he was living at the convent of La Peñuela where, so I heard, a miracle had happened. A field of stubble had caught fire and the fire had reached the fence of the convent grounds, which was made of brushwood and branches of evergreen oak. There were many persons in the convent and they all rushed out to quench the fire lest it should reach the house, but in spite of all they did they could not stop it. Then, they say, Fray John of the Cross went

<sup>1</sup> As related above (p. 340), this happened when the Saint was confessor to the nuns of the Incarnation at Ávila.

<sup>2</sup> N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 869. An autograph MS. addressed to P. José de Jesús María, who at that time was engaged in historical investigations at Granada.

out and told them to desist; he fell on his knees near the flames and they went no farther.

In the same convent he had an attack of fever, which robbed him of his appetite; the only thing he felt like eating was a little asparagus, which was not procurable, since it was out of season, the time being the end of August. On his way to Úbeda, where he was going for treatment, he reached Guadalimar about midday. Preparing to take a short rest below the new bridge, he saw a bunch of asparagus on a large stone in the middle of the river. He asked the lay brother who was with him to see if it belonged to anyone who had been gathering it, and he answered: 'Father, this is a miracle, for it is not the season for asparagus, and there is none to be found in this part of the country.' Then he told him to take it and leave its value, which was a *cuarto*, in the place where he had found it. I saw this asparagus myself because I prepared it for him.

On that same night a breaking-out appeared in the fleshy part of the thigh and on the next morning there was another on the arch of the right foot. When the physician began his treatment he said the disease was erysipelas and he made three or four incisions in the same leg, some of them as long as a hand's breadth. To complete the treatment they had then only to take off the bandages and they obtained as much matter as they could wish. He looked on at all this, grasping some ropes which were fastened to the roof, to the great wonder of the physician and all who saw him; he seemed to me to have great content at his wounds.

All the time he was in bed he seemed to be sleeping, save that occasionally he was heard to repeat these words: *Haec requies mea in sæculum sæculi*. This he was heard frequently to repeat when his pain was at its greatest.

It was a great consolation to us that he was in the convent at that time, as the Prior was most imprudent in his rule of it. The holy Father taught him to rule and us to obey; several times I saw him leave his cell in tears at what the holy Father had said to him. For my part I think that one of the greatest sacrifices that he had to make in this life was that, in order to complete the purgation of his sins or to win greater glory, he was brought by Our Lord at the end of his days into contact with such a man as this Prior. If I were to begin to talk about him in detail, I should never end. I only say, therefore, that he felt and suffered more in this way than from all the physical pain which he had to endure.

I believe that many days before his death he knew at what hour he would die. This I gather from certain precautions which I saw him take. Among others, two days before his death, he asked for all the letters that were beneath the head of his bed; there were a great number of them and he burned them all. He died on the Friday night, at the first stroke of twelve; at one o'clock that day he had foretold his death, saying that that same night he would go to Heaven for Matins. . . .

While he was ill, we brought him some musicians, thinking he would find them a relief from his great pain. But he told them to keep silence, for they disturbed other and better music which he heard interiorly; but I think he did this lest he should forget his pain.

During his entire illness (and I was with him all the time) I saw him impatient only on three occasions. The first occasion was when a friar told him that the wound on the instep of his foot was that of the nail; he reproved him sternly, though without loss of composure. On the second occasion, Fray Antonio de Jesús was with him and we asked him to tell us about his early days. He answered that we ought not to talk of such things, for there was nothing to tell about them. Then the Provincial wanted to tell us something of them, and this he took very badly. The third occasion was on a day when the Provincial came to tell him that Our Lord was about to reward him for the trials which he had suffered; he could not bear this either. . . .

FRAY BARTOLOMÉ DE SAN BASILIO.

To my father Fray José de Jesús María, Discalced Carmelite, Priory of the Holy Martyrs, Granada.

## XVI

### AN ACCOUNT BY M. ANA DE SAN ALBERTO<sup>1</sup>

On the twenty-sixth day of the said month I gave an order to M. Ana de San Alberto to testify to her knowledge of Fray John of the Cross. She said that she had known him well and had had much to do with him. He was a native of Ontiveros and died at Ubeda; his body lies at Segovia. He was Rector at Baeza, twice Prior at Granada, Vicar Provincial of these provinces and Definitor-in-chief of the first Consulta. She had always heard that he had filled these offices entirely as

<sup>1</sup> N.L.M., MS. 12,738, fol. 565. This account is in the handwriting of P. Juan Evangelista but is signed by M. Ana, one of the most proficient of the followers of St. John of the Cross, who was her confessor at Caravaca and frequently exchanged letters with her.

becomes a holy man, with great perfection and to the profit of the friars.

The holy Mother Teresa of Jesus used frequently to say that the soul of this holy Father was one of the holiest and purest that God had in His Church, and that His Majesty had inspired him with wisdom from Heaven. He had the gift of discerning and dealing with spirits, together with such living and effective language that he wrought in souls all that he would. There was once a nun in this convent who suffered a great spiritual trial. This witness testifies that she wrote about it to the holy Mother, who answered her: 'My Father, Fray John of the Cross, is now going to visit you; tell him about this trial, and, with his great sanctity and prudence, I trust in Our Lord, he will put things right for you.' And thus it was; she at once felt the benefit of his help and until her death she testified to the good which he had done to her soul.

When he was Rector at Baeza, he came to this part of the country, and this witness (who was then Prioress) testifies that the holy Father said to her: 'Mother Prioress, why do you not see about founding a house for friars here?' This witness smiled, thinking it to be impossible on account of the poor facilities. 'Take courage and see to it,' he replied, 'for it is the will of God and He will be well pleased at it; see, you will bring it to pass without fail. Let there be a commemoration of Our Lady in the choir, daily without exception; and do not expect much temporal help, for God will give that as you go along.' It happened just as he said. He told me that Our Lord had revealed to him that He would be pleased at the foundation of this convent and gave him to understand that it should be done.

This witness testifies that, when the holy Father was saying Mass in the church of the nuns' convent, she saw his face shining like the sun. This was when he had just elevated the Host for the last time. He was a long time consuming the elements; and from above the corporals there came as it were the loveliest rays of light, which caused us great joy. When Mass was over, he sat down on a chair in the confessional and this witness went to him, and asked him what this was. 'What did you see, daughter?' he asked. And then he became absorbed and could not speak. This witness answered: 'I wanted to know what had been given to your Reverence, for what I saw can have been but the least part of it.' He remained for some time as it were in a trance and when he returned to himself he said: 'God has communicated great blessings to this sinner; with such majesty did He communicate Himself to my

soul that I could not finish the Mass. For this reason I am sometimes afraid of beginning to say Mass. But since you alone have seen it, see that you say nothing of it to anyone. Let it serve for your profit and see what God does to a poor worm such as I.'

He once said to this witness that God communicated such things to his soul with regard to the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity that if Our Lord did not succour him with special help from Heaven it would be impossible for him to live; and as it was his natural strength was greatly exhausted.

This witness testifies that once, when he was talking with her, he told her things that were happening within her soul, which she had never told him. On another occasion, when he was Prior at Granada, he wrote to her about certain things that were happening to her, in these words: 'Since you say nothing to me, I tell you not to be foolish and harbour fears that make the soul cowardly. Give to God that which He has given you, and gives you daily, for it seems to me that you are trying to measure God by the measure of your own capacity. But you should not do so. Prepare yourself, for God seeks to do you a great favour.'<sup>1</sup> And so it came to pass. When she was anxious, having no one to whom she could write in confidence about the favours which God had shown her, she testifies that he wrote to her better and more clearly than she could explain to him.

This witness once had the greatest scruples which tormented her greatly and it seemed to her that she could only find relief by communicating them to him. The holy Father then wrote her a letter as she desired, saying: 'How long, daughter, do you suppose that you will be carried in the arms of others? I desire to see in you so great a detachment from the creatures, and an independence of them, that hell itself would not suffice to trouble you. What are these uncalled-for tears that you are shedding nowadays? How much valuable time do you suppose you have wasted on these scruples? If you would communicate your trials to me, go to that spotless mirror of the Eternal Father, for in that mirror I behold your soul daily, and I doubt not but that you will come away from it comforted and will have no need to go begging at the doors of poor people.'<sup>2</sup>

When he was Vicar Provincial he came to visit this convent and said that he would remain for a week. Then one morning he came in in great haste saying that he had to leave on the following day. The nuns

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. Letter III, p. 243, above.]

<sup>2</sup> [Cf. Letter II, p. 243, above. After 'Father,' the letter adds: 'which is His Son.']

all tried to persuade him to remain for the time for which he had come. He said that his departure was very urgent and he could not do otherwise than go, for they were in great need at Beas; and that he must go even if the snow grew worse (for it was snowing at the time). Seeing that they importuned him greatly, he said to this witness: 'If I stay, daughter, you will see that they will come for me.' On the same day there arrived a messenger, saying that the Mother Prioress at Beas, M. Catalina de Jesús, was dead. Then he said to this witness: 'It was because I knew this that I wanted to go.'

This witness testifies that the holy Father once wrote some letters from here to Doña Ana de Peñalosa, which she saw because he gave them her to seal up. They treated of various matters concerning her soul and offered her consolation. After this there came a messenger from Granada (where Doña Ana was) bringing some letters for the holy Father; and what he had written to her was as it were an answer to all that she had asked him in them; this the present witness can testify since she read both. She then laughed, seeing that he had replied to the letters before receiving them. 'Why are you laughing, foolish one?' he asked. 'Was it not better that I should write those letters last night, for then I was only going without sleep, whereas now we can be speaking of the things of God?' Such was the usual theme of his conversation, for he always spoke of detachment of spirit, mortification and solitude and of how the soul should be united with God; and his words had such power that they seemed to cleave to the soul.

Again, when they imprisoned him in the tiny prison at Toledo, he suffered many trials and ignominies. They gave him many disciplines, fed him on bread and water and ill-treated him in other ways. And on many occasions they tried to bring him to their way of thinking. Thus, he said, they made him many great offers, particularly two most important ones, giving him, among other things, several pieces of gold. Then he answered them: 'He who seeks Christ in detachment has no need of golden trinkets.' This witness knows that he suffered great trials with very special patience.

A certain man at Ávila suspected that the holy Father (who was confessor there) was hindering him from obtaining a certain thing that he desired. One night he waited for him as he came out of the convent where he had been confessing the nuns of the Incarnation and beat him and maltreated him sorely. The holy Father recognized him but would reveal his name to none, and bore this ill-treatment with the

greatest joy, saying to this witness that he had never rejoiced so greatly as in suffering this ill-treatment for the love of God.

Again, this holy Father had a particular gift of exorcism. In one of the convents at Avila, there was a nun possessed by the devil, and, while she was being exorcised, she said that they were not to grow weary, for the devil feared none save a little friar called Fray John of the Cross. Then they called him in to expel the devil and she began to say many evil things and to utter cries; the holy Father said that it seemed to him there were a hundred thousand devils speaking within her, judging from the diversity of their languages; and God was pleased to deliver her. The devils came out at night and dealt the holy Father many blows, such was their wrath and fury.

When he was Vicar Provincial he came to this house for the election of a Prioress. He began the Mass of the Holy Spirit, and a nun saw him through the grille surrounded by a great light which came from the ciborium, and his figure shone brightly. The nun then went to another part of the grille to see if she could see it and she saw it in the same way. When he had finished Mass and was sitting at the grille, giving the address, there came from him rays of light which passed through the grille and seemed to illumine the whole of the choir. After the election was over, he said: 'God reward you, daughters. I am grateful to you, for you have done the will of God.'

ANA DE SAN ALBERTO.

FRAY JUAN EVANGELISTA.

## XVII

LETTER FROM P. JUAN EVANGELISTA TO P. JERÓNIMO DE SAN  
JOSÉ, GIVING INFORMATION ABOUT THE SAINT AND HIS  
WRITINGS (JANUARY 1, 1630)<sup>1</sup>

Jhs. M<sup>a</sup>.

*Pax Christi.* I greatly value the kindness which your Reverence shows me in your letter. If I were what I ought to be, your Reverence

<sup>1</sup> This friar, as we have already said, was the inseparable companion of St. John of the Cross during the last years of his life. He acted as his confessor for long periods and was his close confidant and the participant of his joys and sufferings. He wrote this letter and those which follow at the request of P. Jerónimo de San José, who was historian of the Discalced Reform, and at this time was preparing his well-known *History* of St. John of the Cross, which appeared in 1640. This correspondence gives some idea of the great

would be right in envying my good fortune in having had to do with our venerable Father for nine years.<sup>1</sup> During this time I was his companion on his journeys and elsewhere, so that, with his instruction and example before me, I ought to be his true disciple and imitator. But your Reverence must have pity on me, for, despite all the help and all the good that I had from him, I am the worst person in this province; and I assure your Reverence that I am full of confusion and shame when I remember the great opportunities that I had to be what I should, and see that I am just the contrary. I beg your Reverence to commend me to Our Lord, that He may make me pleasing in His sight.

With regard to having seen our venerable Father writing his books, I saw him write all of them, for, as I have said, I was ever at his side. The *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *Dark Night* he wrote here, in this house, at Granada, little by little, for he was able to proceed with his work only with many interruptions. The *Living Flame of Love* he also wrote in this house, when he was Vicar Provincial, at the request of Doña Ana de Peñalosa, and this he wrote in a fortnight, when he was busy with many other things. *Whither hast vanished* was the first thing that he wrote, and this he also wrote here, having written the stanzas in his prison at Toledo.

With regard to all these books and many other things that he wrote, and his numerous addresses, given both in public and in chapters, I never saw him open a book, nor had he one in his cell, save a Bible and a *Flos Sanctorum*, for he always read the life of each saint upon his festival. His cell was so poor that he had nothing in it but a very small table, a bench, his bed and a painted crucifix.

In speaking of God, and in expounding Scripture, he had a marvelous gift; he was never asked about any passage that he could not expound in full detail; and at times of recreation the whole period was often spent, and much more than spent, in the exposition of passages about which he was consulted. One could write about this for ever. During his journeys he said very little, for he spent most of the time in prayer and singing psalms, which was what he sang habitually.

With respect to Fray Pedro de los Ángeles, I cannot remember diligence with which the Saint's biographer sought information about his life. The information contained in these letters is among the most definite and well authenticated that we possess. All three letters are in the writer's own hand, and are to be found in the original in MS. 12,738, fols. 1,431, 1,435 and 1,439.

<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere the writer tells us that he knew St. John of the Cross for eleven years. There is no real contradiction between these two statements; we know that P. Juan had spoken with the Saint at El Calvario about the year 1578 when he was superior there.

exactly when he went to Rome with Fray Pedro de la Encarnación, but I think it was approximately in the year 1585. With regard to the prophecy that he would return from Rome calced, I do not remember having heard anything about it, for in this matter he was most reserved, and I never heard him say anything that would imply his having supernatural gifts and that could redound to his praise. Nor did I ever hear him speak of his imprisonment and trials, although on a number of occasions he was asked about them.

Concerning this matter I will tell your Reverence something which happened to me about him. One night, very late, when he was Prior of this house of Granada, they came to call him to go out to exorcise a girl of good birth, for in exorcism he had a particular gift from God. After he had been some little time with her he prepared to take some rest. I remained there with some other persons, and the devil began to lament the persistence with which our holy Father persecuted him, saying that in Ávila and in many other places he had cast him from his house, and that he had done his utmost to defeat the Saint and had not been successful, and other things of this kind. And the Saint came out of the room where he was resting and reproved me because I had started to speak with the devil, saying that we should not believe him in anything, and that he was telling lie upon lie in order to deceive us. Thus I saw that he was always very loth to listen to anything that tended to his own esteem and praise. And although I confessed him at Segovia, where many things happened to him, he never told me anything of this kind, though I once caught him in the act, when I entered his cell and found him in ecstasy. When he came out of this, I asked him what had happened to him and he said that while he was enraptured he had seen the Vicar General, who at that time was Father Doria, and the five Definitors, embarking on the sea, and that he cried to them not to do so because they would be drowned if they set sail, and they would not desist and were drowned. This was at the time of the business of Father Gracián. He ordered me strictly not to relate it during his lifetime, and, since it was a supernatural occurrence, I have not related it on occasions that have presented themselves; and if I have told it at any time, which I do not remember having done, it was without making any reference to the supernatural.

All the other things about his life and actions I have related many times and so nothing occurs to me that I can say further.

Your Reverence will see if I can be of assistance to you in anything else. In that case, command me, for I will do it gladly, being the son of

your Reverence, whom may Our Lord preserve with increase of His Holy Spirit, as I desire.

Granada, January 1. May God give your Reverence many happy new years and joyful festivals of the Epiphany. Our Father Prior sends your Reverence many remembrances and good wishes. Your Reverence's,

FRAY JUAN EVANGELISTA.

(*Superscription*): To my Father Fray Jerónimo de San José, Dis-calced Carmelite, whom may Our Lord preserve.

### XVIII

LETTER FROM P. JUAN EVANGELISTA TO P. JERÓNIMO DE SAN  
JOSÉ ON THE SAME SUBJECT AS THE FOREGOING  
(FEBRUARY 18, 1630)

Jhs. M<sup>a</sup>.

*Pax Christi*, etc. I would fain be in your Reverence's holy house and in your company, so that I might serve your Reverence as secretary and spare you the trouble of writing to me; but as Our Lord has ordered it otherwise, it will be a consolation to me to serve our holy Father in anything, and to give your Reverence pleasure, as I desire to do, and as I shall do on any other occasion that offers.

I greatly value the picture which your Reverence has sent me,<sup>1</sup> and which has given all of us in this house much pleasure, and also a great desire to see the books which are not here and which we need. The *Stanças* have been particularly desired, for some copies have arrived here from Brussels with quite a number of errors, and I desire to have those which have been printed here for your credit and our pleasure. May Our Lord have them sent as quickly as possible.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to our holy Father having written his books in this

<sup>1</sup> P. Jerónimo de San José had had some portraits of the Saint engraved in Madrid and had sent some of them to certain of his correspondents who had shown interest in them. They may possibly have been similar to those which he later published in his biography of the Saint.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the edition of the Saint's works edited by P. Jerónimo de San José. In speaking of the copies of the *Stanças* which had arrived from Brussels, he evidently refers to the edition of 1627 published in that city. [See the reference to the errors in this edition, Vol. II, p. 17.]

house, I will set down the facts about which there is no doubt—namely, that the *Stanzas* beginning ‘Whither hast vanished,’ and the *Living Flame of Love*, he wrote here, for he began and ended them in my time. The *Ascent of Mount Carmel* I found already begun when I came to take the habit, which was a year and a half after this house was first founded; he might have brought them here already begun. But what he certainly wrote here is the *Dark Night*, for I saw him write part of it; this is certain, for I saw it.

With respect to Father Pedro de los Ángeles, I will tell you what I saw with my own eyes and remember as if it were happening now. When I took the habit, which was at Christmas in the year 1582, I found Father Pedro de los Ángeles here; I knew him here for about two years. At the end of that period, he persuaded Father Pedro de la Encarnación, who was Procurator here and his beloved son, that they should go to Rome. They decided to do so and went off hurriedly, and after some time the aforementioned Father Pedro de los Ángeles returned here, having joined the Calced. He came to stay in the house of a secular priest, a great friend of his, where I visited him, and soon afterwards he died. His companion remained in our convent at Genoa, where he died with the reputation of being a great servant of God.

Then, in the year following—namely, in 1583—took place the Chapter of Almodóvar, which was attended by our holy Father, who was re-elected for two years, for superiors at that time were elected for no longer, and Father Pedro de los Ángeles was also here; this took place five months after my taking the habit. Now if Father Pedro had gone to Rome on business of the Order before the separation, how could the prophecy have taken place at Almodóvar? For the separation, and consequently the journey to Rome, was much earlier. With regard to this journey, I have no further information save that, when they went off so hurriedly, it was said in the convent that this Father had left one of his shoes in Rome and was going there to get it. I think there is no more to say about the journey; at any rate, I remember nothing. It was more probably at Baeza, where our holy Father was Rector before he went to Granada; and the most probable thing would be that it was at El Calvario, for our holy Father went from Baeza to Beas to confess the nuns, and stayed for some days at El Calvario, which was on the way to the place where Father Pedro was Prior or Vicar. And if there is no certainty about the place, and the fact of the prophecy itself is certain, it is immaterial where it

happened. This that I have said is without the least doubt as trustworthy as though your Reverence had seen it.<sup>1</sup> With respect to the lay brother whom your Reverence describes as being Procurator in the time of our Father, there never was such a brother. During the time that I was with him when I took the habit, I heard it said that a lay brother had recently died here; he was called Fray Alberto, and was a great servant of God of whom all spoke well, but I do not remember having heard that he had been Procurator. He might have been so, however, during the year and a half in which our holy Father was Prior before I took the habit. . . .<sup>2</sup>

May Our Lord preserve your Reverence with great increase of His gifts, as I desire.

Granada, February 18, 1630.

P. JUAN EVANGELISTA.

P.S.—If possible, do me the favour of sending me two volumes of the works of our holy Father;<sup>3</sup> I will give the money to our Father Prior. I shall greatly value this kindness.

## XIX

LETTER CONCERNING ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS. WRITTEN BY  
P. JUAN EVANGELISTA TO P. JERÓNIMO DE SAN JOSÉ  
(MARCH 12, 1630)

Jhs. M<sup>a</sup>.

*Pax Christi*, etc. Your Reverence's letters are of particular comfort to me and so it will never tire me to answer them but will be a pleasure to me. Your Reverence may command me both in this matter and in any others in which I can be of use, and I will respond with all due willingness.

As to what your Reverence says concerning Father Esminda, who

<sup>1</sup> Apparently P. Jerónimo de San José had asked P. Juan Evangelista for trustworthy information about the prophecy referred to. P. Juan Evangelista makes a serious mistake in his reply, as he evidently did not remember that the Provincial Chapter had taken place at Almodóvar in 1578; it was then that the Saint had made this remark. P. Juan Evangelista speaks of the Chapter held in the same town in May 1583, a date with which neither the journey nor its result is compatible. As will be seen in the next letter, the writer later discovers his mistake.

<sup>2</sup> [The remainder of this letter enumerates persons who took the habit while St. John of the Cross was Prior.]

<sup>3</sup> [He adds the words *de misas*, probably meaning that he would pay for the books with money he had received as alms for masses.]

died at the Conception, in Baeza, it is certain that this was before the College was founded, as I have heard it said. The reason is given as being this: if there had been a convent at Baeza, he would not have gone to the hospital; and the holy Father was so fond of suffering and holy poverty, that, had there been a convent, however poor it was, he would have chosen to go there rather than elsewhere.

Concerning our holy Father, there is no doubt that he was Prior of this house when he brought the nuns, for, as I said in my last letter, when I took the habit here, our holy Father had been here a year and a half as Prior, and the nuns came here a year and twenty-three days before I took the habit, so that he had then been Prior for more than five months. This I take as certain and your Reverence may consider it as such.

I had not heard of any other Chapter at Almodóvar than that of which I wrote to your Reverence; it was for this reason that I found difficulty in supposing that the prophecy had taken place there. On the assumption that there was another before the division of the Order, things no doubt took place as your Reverence says.

Our Father Prior and Father Fray Gaspar de Santa María are very grateful to your Reverence for sending them your remembrances, and they return them.

I am well, glory be to Our Lord, and may He preserve your Reverence with great increase of His grace, as I desire.

Granada, March 12, 1630.

FRAY JUAN EVANGELISTA.

(*Superscription*): To my Father Fray Jerónimo de San José, Discalced Carmelite, whom may Our Lord preserve.—Madrid. Portage: half a real.

B.—REPLY OF R. P. M. FRAY BASILIO PONCE DE LEÓN, PRIMA PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA, TO THE NOTES AND OBJECTIONS WHICH WERE MADE CONCERNING CERTAIN PROPOSITIONS TAKEN FROM THE BOOK OF OUR FATHER FRAY JOHN OF THE CROSS<sup>1</sup> (JULY 11, 1622)

In fulfilment of your command, Most Illustrious Sir, and submitting all that I say to the correction of the Holy Roman Catholic Church,

<sup>1</sup> 'This paper must be kept carefully as there is no copy of it,' reads the note which follows the title on the sheet of paper which serves as a title-page to this opusculum.

The sub-title states that the reply in question was made to the Inquisition (see Vol. I

my feeling with regard to the works of the blessed Father Fray John of the Cross, whose book is also known as the *Dark Night*, is that the study of them should not and must not be prohibited by the Holy Office.

1. First, because this book has in its favour the presumption that its doctrine is true, since it was seen and approved by the University of Alcalá, where the Faculty of Theology is so famous; and at that time it was approved by men who were not only among the most learned in the kingdom, but were also very pious and expert in these matters of prayer and rare virtue: such was Dr. Luis de Montesinos. There were also among them two Masters of the Order of Saint Dominic, Fray Juan González and Fray Lorenzo Gutiérrez, who without dispute are among the most learned of their Order. This weighty body of approval makes it essential, before pronouncing an adverse judgment upon this book, to proceed very slowly and carefully, the more so as some of those who examined it at that time were ministers of the Holy Office and the authority of any others who examine it must needs be very great if their findings are to be opposed to the opinions of such distinguished judges.

2. Secondly, because this great man, Fray John of the Cross, was of blameless life and was the first founder of the celebrated Reform of the Discalced Carmelite Fathers, together with the holy Mother Teresa of Jesus; and for the corner-stones of the building of any religious Order or restoration are chosen notable persons whose virtue is sufficient to restore the building if at any time it falls into ruin. Wherefore it is not to be presumed that for the corner-stone of so great a building God would choose a man whose teaching is so evil, so full of error and so prejudicial to the Church, as some think that to be which is contained in this book.

3. Thirdly, because this great man was nurtured at the breasts of the doctrine of the holy Mother Teresa of Jesus, and of her books, and one of the excellences which the most grave and learned persons find in the doctrine of the Holy Mother is that no deluded persons have

pp. li ff.). Its author was a native of Granada, the son of a Count of Bailén, his mother being a cousin of Luis de León, who was also a Professor at Salamanca University. Fray Basilio entered the Augustinian Order at the age of twenty-one and later held several Chairs successively at Salamanca. He succeeded to the Prima Chair in 1626 and died on August 28, 1629. The text of the document which is here translated belonged to the Discalced Carmelites of Madrid, whence, at the time of the religious persecutions of the early nineteenth century, it passed to the National Library of Spain. Here it still remains, but for a long time it was mislaid and believed to have been stolen; it was thus little known until it appeared in P. Silverio's edition of the Works of St. John of the Cross. [It has not previously appeared in English.]

made use of it. This is the contention of Fray Luis de León in the apologia to which I refer at the end of this judgment. And since that great Father was brought up on that doctrine and learned from it, as we shall see hereafter, what he wrote, to take objection to his book is to take objection to the doctrine of the holy Mother Teresa of Jesus.

4. Fourthly, because the Discalced Carmelite Order is now taking up the beatification of this blessed Father John of the Cross, since his life and miraculous works are such as to make urgent the preferment of this claim. If there now came from the Holy Office any prohibition of, or embargo upon this book, the Church would certainly not beatify him; for since the life and works of a man are in close correspondence with each other, it would be difficult to persuade the Church that the life of a writer was good if his works, by which he had been guided in his life, were bad. This reason makes it essential to go about this business with the greatest care.

5. Fifthly, because the miracle is well known which has reference to the relics of the uncorrupted flesh of this blessed Father, wherein, in divers manners, is seen the figure of Christ Our Lord. Christ crucified was thus in his flesh after his death, but he would not have Him in his doctrine if this were so far contrary to the Church's teaching. The fact that the figure was imprinted in the flesh of the blessed Father could only result from the fact that Christ was imprinted in his fame, and this would not be so if his doctrine were erroneous; for words are the images of ideas, and thoughts which were so prejudicial, impure and corrupt could have no correspondence with light, purity and spiritual progress in Christ our Lord.

6. Sixthly, because justice brings lawsuits to an end lest they should continue for ever, and so that there may be no opportunity for their revival. Upon the whole case of this book judgment was in effect pronounced after the examination made by the Holy Inquisition of the books of the holy Mother Teresa of Jesus, for, as we shall see, their doctrine is hers, and if the arguments which were then put forward, both for the opposition and for the defence, this being in the time of Cardinal Chiroga [*sic*], are now studied, it will be found that all that is said against these books is there answered.

I have often thought that the devil, enraged at the good that is done, and has been done, in the Church through the writings of a woman, for innumerable persons have been edified thereby, encourages grave and learned men, who are zealous for the public good, to make zealous endeavours for the prohibition of the doctrine of this blessed Father,

so that the doctrine of the holy Mother may tacitly and secretly be attacked and blackened, and that the faithful may be prevented from reading books from which they have obtained such great profit.

And an obligation lies upon us to pay great attention to this point, for, as the universal Church has so completely approved the doctrine of Saint Teresa that, in the collect for her festival, it is called celestial (*cælestis ejus doctrinæ*), which is also a title given by the Church to that of Saint Dionysius, as is seen in its lessons, it follows that, since the doctrine of this blessed Father is the same, it can be shown by evidence that it is implicitly approved by the Church together with the other.

What is now happening with regard to this book in connection with the Illuminists of Seville happened also, at the time of the Illuminists of Llerena and Jaén, in connection with the book entitled the *Ascent of Mount Sion*. Those who persecuted and calumniated it tried to prove that it was the textbook of the doctrine of those Illuminists, as we gather from Epistle VI.<sup>1</sup> In the end the book came out victorious; it was held to be free from blame and pronounced good; so much so that the holy Mother Teresa of Jesus says that it was her guide with respect to the prayer of Union. In the book of her life (chapter xxiii), she writes thus: 'Looking through books to see if I could learn how to describe my method of prayer, I found in one, called *The Ascent of the Mount*, which describes the union of the soul with God, all the symptoms I had when I was unable to think of anything.' All the doctrine of the book of Father Fray John of the Cross, or the most important part of it, is in that book. From this it may clearly be deduced that the question at issue has twice been pronounced upon by the Holy Office, wherefore there should be no possibility of its revival.

7. Lastly, because the doctrine of this book is Catholic, good and profitable for those whom God leads by this road and according to this type of prayer; and these are not numerous, but few and perfect. The whole of its doctrine has been set down, taught and expounded by the most learned doctors and holy men who are free from all suspicion, whose books circulate everywhere, and are widely approved. This, with the favour of God, I shall prove when I discuss each of the propositions which have been criticized by the censors, so that complete and clear satisfaction may be given, consistent with brevity, though none must consider as over-long any defence of innocence.

8. Before coming to discuss this, I assume that one thing is certain :

<sup>1</sup> [I.e. Letter VI in the small collection of twelve letters printed with the *Ascent of Mount Sion* (cf. Vol. I, p. lii, above).]

namely that, in order to judge the doctrine of a book, or of a proposition which is found in it, it is necessary to look at the preceding and the following pages, and also at the doctrine taught by the same author elsewhere, so that the true sense of the book or the propositions may be gathered. For there are many propositions in the books of saints, and even in the Sacred Scriptures, which, if wrenched from their context, could be made to appear similar to those from the books of heretics; but in their context they have a very different sense, because the antecedents and the consequents are as different as is heaven from earth.

As an example of this, take the words of Saint Paul, *Justificati ex fide*. These words are used erroneously by heretics, whereas Saint Paul used them in the sense of the Catholic faith. From this it is to be inferred that because certain words or propositions in this book are found in the mouths or the writings of the Illuminists they are not to be condemned as though they were their own. For in their true context they have a very different sense and are based upon different principles, as we shall see in due course in the case of nearly all of these propositions.

9. I assume likewise that we must not believe what we have seen in the Illuminists to be the effect of this doctrine, even though they may repeat some part of what is taught in this book; we must not for that reason describe it outright as erroneous. If they had the purity of life and detachment from all earthly affections and from themselves that this book declares to be necessary to attainment of the perfect state of contemplation, they would not have fallen so shamefully. For anyone who would enter this sanctuary without first cleansing his soul of vices may be sure that he will fall into very grievous sins, as is taught expressly by Saint Augustine in the book *De quantitate animæ*, Chapter xxxiii:

Quod qui prius volunt facere, quam mundati fuerint et sanati, ita illa luce reverberantur veritatis ut non solum nihil boni, sed etiam mali plurimum in ea putent esse, atque ab ea nomen veritatis abjudicent et cum quadam libidine et voluptate miserabili in suas tenebras quas eorum morbus pati potest medicinæ maledicentes refugiant; unde divino afflatu et prorsus ordinatissime illud a Profeta dicitur: Cor mundum crea in me Deus, et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis.<sup>1</sup>

This is likewise taught by Saint Bernard in his third sermon on the

<sup>1</sup> Migne, *Patr. lat.*, Vol. XXXII, p. 1,076.

Circumcision,<sup>1</sup> and by Albertus Magnus, in his book *De Adhærendo Deo*, Chapter v, and by Gerson in his treatise on contemplation, and by the holy Fray Tomás de Villanueva, in his commentary upon those words of the Songs, *Capite nobis vulpes parvulas* (folio 124), where, after many other admirable words, he writes as follows :

Post serenatam mentem et ab omni labe mundatam, post vernantem animam, et ab omni perturbatione tranquillam, post hæc (inquam) omnia : Surge, propera, amica mea, etc. Tunc intra Dominici pectoris alveum mellis et favi degustare lateat ; tunc Spiritus sancti secreta rimari ; tunc cælestium sacramentorum absconditum penetrare ; et de fontibus Salvatoris aquas in gaudio haurire tempus est.

And the same doctrine is also taught by a man of apostolic zeal, Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires, Archbishop of Braga, a most learned and most holy man, in his *Compendium of Spiritual Doctrine* (Part II, folio 73), where he says :

Ad hanc vero felicitatem nemo pervenire poterit unquam nisi strenue insistat abnegationi, mortificationi et sui ipsius despectioni, ardentibus in Deum desideriis, et frequentissimis orationibus, præhabita rectitudine et integritate et puritate intentionis.

And in the same book (folio 141) he adduces some words of Gerson :

Contemplationis altitudinem inepti sunt homines in fervore passionum detenti quæ nisi graventur non solum inutiliter et arroganter, sed etiam in maximam sui perniciem homo eam quæreret ut ex vitis Patrum aperte constat.

And in the same book (folio 177) he says with Saint Isidore :

Prius (inquit Isidorus) oportet animam purgare a fædibus terrenarum affectionum quam posse simpliciter et pure in Deum tendere. Sicut enim peculiare et proprium est igni, seclulis impedimentis, sursum ascendere et proprium locum petere, ita animæ pravarum affectionum pondere solutæ, in Deum, qui locus est ipsius proprius, elevari solent.

And the same doctrine is taught in the book entitled the *Ascent of Mount Sion*, Book III, Chapters i, iii, and frequently elsewhere ; and it is also elegantly expounded by Father Suárez in his *De Religione*, Vol. II, Book II, Chapter xii.

I have made all this quite explicit because it is relevant to what I shall say hereafter in defending some of these propositions, maintaining that it is unduly severe to attribute to the doctrine of a man of

<sup>1</sup> Migne, *Patr. lat.*, Vol. CLXXXIII, pp. 137-42.

apostolic virtue the errors of the Illuminists because they laid hands upon this or that part of his doctrine instead of following it all. How far were they from attaining the end to which this book would lead them, since they followed not the methods which it proposes to them, but adopted methods entirely contrary to these! If they had embraced that purity of life and engaged in that practice of the virtues which this book teaches at every step, they would have prepared themselves for God's communication to them of the spirit of contemplation; but, endeavouring by bestial means to attain to this mount of dark light and of illumined darkness, they readily provoke the wrath of God, and, instead of life, encounter death. The reason for the errors of these men must be attributed not to this book but to their own perverse wills; they would not embrace the methods of the Purgative Way which this book teaches them, but sought to reach the goal which it sets before them without taking the first step on the way.

10. I assume, finally, that because these difficulties are raised against the doctrine of this book, it must not be thought the less of, but much the more, nor must we proceed in bad faith, with the aim of condemning it, but in good faith. For it is well known that serious contradictions have been proffered against particular points of the doctrine which God communicates to certain doctors so that they may expound them. Consider, for example, the doctrine of Saint Augustine concerning predestination and grace: how frequently it was attacked, until the Church sponsored it after the labours upon it of Saint Prosper and Saint Hilary. Or consider the writings of Saint Gregory, which men began to burn, and burned entirely as far as his work on the *Pentateuch*: they would have burned every one of them if a disciple of his had not cried out that he had seen a dove on the head of Saint Gregory when he was writing; and to-day the Church sets great store by all that he wrote. Or consider, again, the doctrine of Saint Thomas Aquinas, which caused such concern in Paris that his works also would have been burned had not his doctrine been defended by Egidius Romanus, a disciple of the Saint and General of my Order; yet at a later date the Apostolic See described each article as miraculous.

The height of contemplation is a height most sublime, trodden by few, and upon the road to it the devil is wont to conceal himself, and put on a mask, in order to deceive those whom he cannot deceive with his own countenance. The experiences concerned are acts of our souls, very much loftier than anything related to sense; they are difficult to understand, and are frequently uncomprehended by the very person

to whom they belong. Therefore it is not surprising if the doctrine which treats of them appears new, extraordinary and difficult, and if in the past it has been subjected to calumnies like that of the *Ascent of Mount Sion* and that of the holy Mother Teresa of Jesus.

It will be the will of God that this opposition should serve for the refinement of the gold, and that truth should prevail. We must therefore humbly beseech God for His aid so that we may recognize the truth, lest that which is false should be approved and that which is true should be condemned. And if a man, however learned he be, cannot comprehend the delicacies and subtleties of this type of prayer, he should not for that reason desire the condemnation of books which teach it to those who are capable of practising it nor should he strive to have them recalled, for in the field of virtue there is not one single road, but many, and God leads some persons by one road and some by another. Let us here set down the words of the holy Mother in her *Conceptions of the Love of God* (folio 377, p. 2): 'Not like certain learned men, who, not having been led in this way of prayer by the Lord, and not having the beginnings of spirituality, try so hard to reduce everything to reason, and to measure everything by their own understanding, that it looks as if all their learning is going to enable them to succeed in comprehending all the wonders of God. If only they would learn something from the most holy Virgin!'<sup>1</sup>

Let us trust God, for, if the doctrine is true, however difficult it be, He will give us illumination so that we may recognize it as such. This was expressed admirably by the holy Mother in her *Interior Castle* (Fifth Mansions, Chapter i): 'If I am mistaken, I am very ready to give credence to those who have great learning. For even if they have not themselves experienced these things, men of great learning have a certain instinct to prompt them. As God uses them to give light to His Church, He reveals to them anything which is true so that it shall be accepted. . . . In any case, where matters are in question for which there is no explanation, there must be others about which they can read, and they can deduce from their reading that it is possible for these first-named to have happened. Of this I have the fullest experience; and I have also experience of timid, half-learned men whose shortcomings have cost me very dear.'<sup>2</sup>

We shall now begin to discuss the propositions which are the object of criticism.

<sup>1</sup> [*Conceptions*, Chap. vi: *C.W.S.T.J.*, II, 393.]

<sup>2</sup> [*C.W.S.T.J.*, II, 250.]

## PROPOSITION I

(Vol. I, p. 29)<sup>1</sup>

**'It is supreme ignorance for the soul to think that it will be able to pass to this high estate of union with God if first it void not the desire of natural and supernatural things which may pertain to it through self-love.'**

11. This doctrine is sure and true, and is repeated by all writers who deal with the spiritual life and the Prayer of Union, and if the Illuminists who are said to have made use of it had practised it truly they would not have had so miserable a fall. No charge is more often laid upon us by spiritual men than this detachment from all things and from love of self in order that we may attain to the Prayer of Union. One of the marks given by Saint Teresa by means of which a person may know if he is approaching the Prayer of Union is that he must be detached from his own interests (*Life*, Chapter xix). In the third book of the *Ascent of Mount Sion*, and in the first and eighth chapters of that book, the same matter is treated at length. Albertus Magnus, in Chapter ii of the third book of *De Adhærendo Deo*, repeats this doctrine continually:

Quicumque talem statum aggredi et ingredi desiderat et satagit, opus est omnino, ut velut clausis oculis et sensibus, de nulla re penitus implicet aut perturbet, sollicitus sit, aut curet, sed cuncta tamquam impertinentia et noxia ac perniciosa funditus excutiat.

And in Chapters iii and v he says:

ab omnibus quantum possibile est, teipsum absolves: mentis oculum semper in puritate et tranquillitate custodias: intellectum a phantasmatibus et formis rerum infirmarum preserves; voluntatis affectum a curis terrenorum penitus absolves; et summo vero bono amore fervido radicatus inhæreas.

To this he adds many other good sayings. He also treats of this matter in Chapters vi and viii, where he has these notable words:

Devota namque anima sic debet esse cum Deo unita, et suam voluntatem divinæ voluntati tam conformem habere et facere, quod se cum nulla creatura occupet seu adhæreat, sicut dum non erat creata: ac si nihil sit præter solum Deum et ipsam animam.

<sup>1</sup> [The references in the original are given to the *editio princeps*. We append only the appropriate reference to this edition, but quote the text of each proposition according to P. Basilio.]

The same doctrine is set down by Saint Augustine in the twelfth book of *De Genesi ad litteram*, at the end of Chapter xxvii, where he says: *Sed nisi ab hac vita quisque quodammodo moriatur*.<sup>1</sup> And this is the doctrine of Saint Dionysius in the first chapter of his *De Mystica Theologia*:

Tu autem Timothee carissime, maxima mysticorum spectaculorum exercitatione qua vales, prætermitte et sensus et mentis actiones eaque omnia quæ sub sensum cadunt et animo cernuntur et quæ non sunt et quæ sunt omnia.

And Father Suárez, in the second book of his *De Religione* (Chapter xii, No. 19), expounds the matter thus:

Actiones ergo quas relinquere consulit, illæ tantum sunt quæ circa res alias et extra Deum quodammodo versantur.

And the same Saint Dionysius, in Chapter vii of *De Divinis Nominibus*, says:

Illis veraciter lucere Deum qui impura omnia et pura transiliunt omnem omnium Sanctarum sublimitatum ascensumque transcendunt; cunctaque divina lumina et sonos sermonesque cælestes deferentes caliginem subeunt, ubi veraciter ille est supra omnia.

It is evident from this how greatly this proposition differs from that which was laid down by an Illuminist, who said that, because he saw a boy cross his path, he sinned, because he fulfilled his desire therein; and also how different it is from the opinion of those who say they must be detached from their will by submitting to interior movements whereby the door is opened to the commission of gross actions, just as the Lutheran heretics pay heed only to interior movements for the guidance of their lives, and thus at every step plunge into errors. It is also different from the opinion of others who say that works done out of charity are not done for God's sake but for the sake of self-interest.

Nothing of this can be inferred from the proposition of this Father, who demands only that we detach our desire from all save that which is God, or for God's sake, and demands the negation of all self-love; for He says expressly that this love is the cause of the hindrance of the abundance of the Divine Spirit, even as Saint Augustine said in expounding these words of the Psalmist: *Defecit spiritus meus: Impleat me spiritus tuus*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Migne, *Patr. lat.*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 477.

<sup>2</sup> Migne, *Patr. lat.*, Vol. XXXVII, p. 1,852.

Nor do I see in the proposition of this Father a single word which obliges one to understand that he is demanding more here than that perfect self-abnegation which the saints demand for spiritual perfection. There are some admirable words of Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires in folio 44 of his book :

*Nihil tenaci corde possideas, nulli creaturæ mente inhæras: nullius viri quantumvis sancti amicitiam et familiaritatem humanitus expetas, nam non solum, quæ mala sunt, sed etiam bona huic sapientiæ officiant, si inordinate diliguntur, vel quærantur; nam lamina aurea obiecta oculis non minus quam ferrea visum impedire solet. Privatum amorem ex corde extirpatum et propriam voluntatem deponens, Deo te ipsum tradito et te in ipsum perfectæ transfundito. Numquam ore vel corde, habita tui ipsius et proprii commodi ratione, dicas: hoc volo, hoc nolo, hoc eligo, illud respuo; nec unquam aliquid tuum quæras, sed omni prorsus proprietate rejecta, spolia te ipso et tibi ac omnibus hujus mundi rebus ita moriaris ac si nunquam viveres, aut omnino mortuus esses. In omnibus honorem Dei quærito et id enititor ut ejus voluntas in omnibus impleatur.*

What clearer words can be desired for the confirmation of this detachment of the will from all self-love which this author requires for attainment to perfect contemplation? The same doctrine can be found in the said book, at folio 79. How different this proposition is from that which was condemned in the Council of Vienne, under Clement V, we shall say hereafter when we are discussing the ninth proposition.

## PROPOSITION II

(Vol. I, p. 66)

**In treating of the kinds of night through which a soul must pass in order to reach this union with God, he says of the second night: ‘And this second night, which is faith, belongs to the higher part of man, which is the rational part, and, in consequence, is more interior and obscure, since it deprives it of the light of reason, or, to speak more clearly, blinds it.’**

12. It is not said in this proposition that grace destroys nature, nor that it is blinded, for faith is light which illumines; nor is it said that the light of reason is lost; but the author says, as the saints say, that through faith man sees and sees not, recognizes and recognizes not, knows and knows not. He knows through the testimony of God and

he knows not because he sees not the things which he believes to be in himself; and likewise through natural reason he attains not these things and surrenders himself as a captive, even as Saint Paul says: *Captivantes intellectum in obsequium fidei*. What Saint Paul here terms the taking captive of natural light by means of faith, this author calls the blinding of the reason, because the soul allows itself to be carried onward with its eyes closed and seeing not, but guided by faith. In this sense Saint Dionysius wrote in the seventh chapter of *De Divinis Nominibus*: *Ignorantione acquiri internam conjunctionem cum Deo*. This is not privative ignorance, which would be a journeying to imperfection rather than to perfection; but in this very thing that a man knows of God he knows what He is not rather than what He is; in which sense Saint Dionysius says also: *Ut illi conjungaris qui supra omnem substantiam omnemque scientiam est ignote*. He means *sine cognitione* only in the sense that the very knowledge that we have of God in this life is ignorance of Him as He is. And so elsewhere he calls it *divinæ caliginis radium*, and illustrates this by quoting the words of the Psalmist: *Qui posuit tenebras latibulum suum*. And in the first chapter of the same book he says: *Eo quoque ipso quod nihil cognoscis, supra sensum mentemque cognoscens*. And at the beginning of the second chapter he says: *Ad hanc nos per lucidam limpidissimamque caliginem admitti oramus, et per visus scientiæque privationem videre et scire eum qui omnem aspectuum scientiamque transcendit*. Note here the phrase *per visus scientiæque privationem*, which is the very phrase used by this author, and is used in the same way. And when Saint Dionysius explains the sense of these negations and affirmations as a matter of truth and not as contrary to each other, he adds:

Hoc ipsum non videre et non scire, est veraciter Deum videre et scire, et eum qui substantiâ superior est, ex omnium quæ sunt ablatione celebrare.

And elsewhere, writing to his disciple Dorotheus, he says:

Divina caligo et lux inaccessibilis in qua Deus inhabitare dicitur hæc propter nimiam æque substantiam supereminet claritatem, inaccessibilis est: atque ipsa propter substantialis luminis copiam ex ea manantis inaccessibilis existit, in ea 'liquaescit,' in ea absorbitur quisquis Deum videre meruit.

Note here the word *liquaescit*, which means not to destroy nature with that supernatural light that is given by grace, but rather describes how natural reason remains buried and absorbed, being, by comparison with that other light, ignorance and blindness. And Albertus Magnus,

in the ninth chapter of his aforementioned book, having set down the same doctrine as this of Saint Dionysius, says: *Et hæc caligo est quam Deus inhabitare dicitur, quam Moises intravit.*

From all this it is very clearly to be inferred that, though faith is a light which illumines, it blinds likewise; and that these propositions are not contrary and consequently are not opposed to the doctrine of Scripture and the saints; and this doctrine may be proved by that same passage from the Apostle quoted by the censor, where Saint Peter says of faith: *Lucerna ardenti in caliginoso loco.* If it be shining, how is it dark? If it be dark, how is it shining? Faith illumines and blinds: it illumines, because it communicates to the soul the truth which it knows by Divine testimony; it blinds, because it expresses truth that is dark and it sees not this as it is in itself, and, because the understanding with its natural argument and reasoning cannot attain to it, it remains without seeing, surrendering itself to the teaching of faith which it has as a guide. All this the holy Fray Tomás de Villanueva, in his commentary on these words, *Capite nobis vulpes parvulas* (*op. cit.*, Chapter xxvii, p. 2), called in an elegant phrase *cancellata visione*: It is as though one were looking through shutters, so that one partly sees and partly sees not, because the slats of the shutters hinder one.

### PROPOSITION III

(Vol. I, pp. 108-9)

**In Chapter XIII, the title of which is 'The signs which the spiritual person may recognize in himself, in order that he may begin to strip the understanding of the imaginary forms and reasonings of meditation,' continuing the same matter, he says: 'The first sign is his realization that he can no longer meditate or work with his imagination, neither can take pleasure therein as he was wont to do aforetime; he rather finds aridity in that which aforetime was wont to captivate his senses and to bring him sweetness.'**

13. The doctrine of this proposition is all true and very sure: in order to expound it, I divide it into three parts. The first part concerns the stripping of the understanding of imaginary forms; the second, in stripping it of the reasonings of meditation; the third concerns the sign which is set as marking the soul's arrival at this point, which

comes when it cannot meditate or work with the imagination or take pleasure therein. And, in order that the truth of all this may become clear, I first lay down that it is not in the power of man, neither does it fall within the scope of human industry, to reach so high a point of contemplation and the prayer of union as this; it is all the special mercy of God, Who leads into this state such a soul as He wills; the part of the soul itself is to prepare itself by the practice of virtues and to make itself neither unworthy of this blessing nor incapable of receiving it by setting an obstacle before Divine grace. This is the teaching of Father Suárez, in the aforementioned *De Oratione* (Book II, Chapter xiv, No. 6), and of the holy Fray Tomás de Villanueva, in his exposition of the *Song of Songs*, on the words: *Introduxit me Rex in cellam vinariam* (folio 122, p. 1). Here he says:

Habet Rex cellaria multa hic, sicut in cælo varias mansiones; sed ad nullam illarum aliqua intrare præsumat nisi manu Regis fuerit introducta. Et vide an de eis Profeta loquatur: quia cognovi litteraturam tuam introibo in potentias Domini; nam sicut nemo novit quæ sunt hominis, nisi spiritus hominis, qui in ipso est, ita quæ sunt Dei nemo novit, nisi spiritus Dei, et cui spiritus voluerit revelare; ad temporalia eximus, ad spiritualia intramus, sed cum Regi placuerit quemquam intromittere. Sunt cellaria panis, olei, vini, butyri, mellis, aliorumque licorum varia; ad vini cellaria rarus est ingressus nec conceditur nisi illi quæ in umbra fidei requievit, et contemplationis fructibus saturata est.

The same thing is affirmed by Saint Teresa in her *Life* (Chapter xii), and this is noted by Father-Master Fray Luis de León, whose words I shall quote later.

14. This being laid down, we pass to the first part of our argument. That the understanding may attain to working in contemplation, when stripped of imaginary forms and making use only of intellectual images, and that this frequently happens, is proved at length by Father Suárez in the said book (Book II, Chapter x, No. 12; Chapters xiv-xvii) and it is the express doctrine of Saint Augustine in Book XII of *De Genesi ad litteram* (Chapters vi, vii).<sup>1</sup> Here Saint Augustine is distinguishing between corporeal, spiritual and intellectual visions, and these are two things which enter not through the senses. And in Chapter xxvi he says:

Porro autem si quemadmodum raptus est a sensibus corporis ut esset in istis similitudinibus corporum quæ spiritu videntur, ita et ab ipsis rapiatur ut in illam quasi regionem intellectualium vel intelligibilium subvehatur, ubi

<sup>1</sup> Migne, *Patr. lat.*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 458-9.

sine ulla corporis similitudine perspicua veritas cernitur; nullis opinionum falsarum nebulis obfuscatur; ibi virtutes animæ non sunt operosæ ac laboriosæ. Et infra: una ibi et tota virtus est amare quod videas, et summa felicitas habere quod amas.<sup>1</sup>

This I pointed out in some notes which I wrote on the *Confessions* of B. Alonso de Orozco, Nos. 22 and 23, and it had previously been pointed out by Father-Master Fray Luis de León in a note written by him on the *Interior Castle* of the holy Mother (Seventh Mansions, Chapter i) where he says: 'Though man in this life, if so raised by God, may lose the use of his senses and have a fleeting glimpse of the Divine Essence, as was probably the case with Saint Paul and Moses and certain others, the Mother is not speaking here of this kind of vision, which, though fleeting, is intuitive and clear, but of a knowledge of this mystery which God gives to certain souls, through a most powerful light which He infuses into them, not without created species. But, as this species is not corporeal, nor figured in the imagination, the Mother says that this vision is intellectual and not imaginary.'<sup>2</sup> This was likewise the doctrine of Albertus Magnus, in the book which we have been citing, in Chapter iv of which he says:

Felix ergo qui per abstersionem continuam phantasmatum et imaginum, ac per introversionem et inibi per sursum ductionem mentis in Deum, tandem aliquando obliviscitur phantasmatum quodammodo, ac per hoc consequentes operatur interius nudo ac simplici ac puro intellectu et affectu circa objectum simplicissimum Deum: Omnia igitur phantasmata, species, imagines ac formas rerum omnium citra Deum a mente rejicias ut in solo nudo intellectu et affectu a voluntate tuum pendeat exercitium circa Deum intra te.

This same matter he continues to treat at length in the same chapter. Agreement with this doctrine is shown by Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires, in the second part of his compendium (folio 89, p. 2). After quoting several passages from Saint Dionysius, he says:

O vere beata anima quæ propria omni operatione seposita in vi memorativa nudatur omnibus imaginibus; in intellectu sentit et fovet præfulgidas illuminationes Solis justitiæ.

And the same doctrine is taught in the *Ascent of Mount Sion*, Book III, Chapter iv.

15. The second part of my argument—that the soul strips itself

<sup>1</sup> Migne, *Patr. lat.*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 476.

<sup>2</sup> [For the context, see *C.W.S.T.J.*, II, 331.]

in contemplation and that the understanding reasons not therein but works by means of a simple intelligence alone—is generally received doctrine. It is taught by Father Suárez in Book II, Chapter x of the work aforementioned, and it is the doctrine of Saint Thomas (2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>æ</sup>, Q. 180, A. 6) where he says that it is a simple act without reasoning, and in this way he expounds the words of Saint Dionysius: *Necessaria est omnis convolutio intellectualium virtutum ipsius*. And Saint Thomas adds: *Ut scilicet cessante discursu figatur ejus intuitus in contemplatione unius simplicis veritatis*; so that, although the soul may previously have been reasoning, there is no reasoning in what the theologian describes as pure contemplation.

The same doctrine is supported by the definition of contemplation given by Saint Bernard in his book *De Scala Claustrali*, viz.: *Contemplatio est mentis in Deum suspensa elevatio*; and also in the second book *De Consideratione ad Eugenium*: *Est verus certusque intuitus animi de quacumque re, sive apprehensio veri non dubia*. Here should be noted the words *intuitus* and *apprehensio*, which do not mean reasonings. And the same doctrine is supported by Saint Augustine, in Chapter xxxiii of his book *De Quantitate animæ*, where he calls the seventh step of the soul (which is contemplation) *quædam mansio . . . serenitatis et æternitatis afflatus*.<sup>1</sup> These words describe this very thing. And in this prayer of union there is a suspension of the soul and no reasoning whatsoever.

This is taken as being true by Father-Master Fray Luis de León in an apologia which is contained in his compendium of the degrees of prayer (folio 18, p. 1): 'God, applying (to the soul) His light and His strength, draws it near to Himself, suspends the reasoning of the understanding and enkindles the will with unitive love.' And in a note which he wrote to the book of Saint Teresa he called mystical theology

the presentation (to the soul) of a number of things supernatural and divine and the infusion into it of a great abundance of light so that it may see this with simple regard, and without reasoning, consideration or labour, and with such force that it can understand naught else, neither can have pleasure therein. And this does not stop at seeing and wondering, but the light passes to the will, and, becoming fire within it, enkindles it in love. Whosoever suffers this, for so long as he suffers it, has his understanding fixed upon that which he sees, and marvelling at it, and his will burns in love for it, while his memory is completely idle; for the soul that is occupied with present joy

<sup>1</sup> Migne, *Patr. lat.*, Vol. XXXII, p. 1,076.

admits no other occupation of the memory. Of this raising up or suspension of the soul it is said that it is supernatural: that is, that the soul more properly suffers therein than works. And it is said that nobody must presume to raise himself up, before he be raised up: for one reason, because this transcends all our industry and thus would be in vain; for another, because it would show a lack of humility, and the holy Mother warns us of this with good reason, because there are books of prayer which counsel those who pray to suspend thought and to allow nothing to figure in the imagination, with the result that they remain cold and undevout.

The foregoing are the words of Father-Master Fray Luis de León. The same thing is said by Father-Master Gracián in the notes which he wrote on the holy Mother's *Conceptions of the Love of God*; and these are to be found in the aforementioned compendium of the degrees of prayer, folio 381. He says concerning this kind of prayer:

It is true that the soul works not by means of reasoning or meditation, searching for reasons and deducing from them other reasons, but is attentively understanding, and it is for this reason that the Holy Mother and other spiritual persons say that the understanding is bound and works not. By this they mean that it neither reasons nor meditates nor works as it is wont to do when there is no rapture.

And farther on he says:

There is no better example of this than a child asleep. Its mother gives it the breast, and it sucks, swallows and absorbs the milk, though, being asleep, it is unaware that it is doing so.

And the same doctrine is continued at length on folios 384 ff.

Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires, in the book aforementioned (folio 139, p. 2), uses this comparison of the soul with a child asleep to expound the same truth:

Similes namque fiunt parvulo matrem amplexanti, ubera sugenti, qui plerumque nihil videt, aut audit, aut saltem se videre et audire non judicat, experimentaliter solum delectatione et lætitia occupatus: par est affectualis cognito Theologorum mysticorum deliciis affluentium super dilectum suum.

This is also the doctrine of the *Ascent of Mount Sion*. The places in which the holy Mother teaches this same doctrine are innumerable. I shall quote a few: *Life* (ed. Madrid, 1607, p. 105); *Interior Castle*, IV; *Way of Perfection*, Chapters xxviii, xxxi. Note that which she says in great detail (folio 124) where she makes the comparison of the soul with the child; also in *Interior Castle*, IV, i, ii, and V, ii, which is a

chapter well worthy of note; and in her *Life*, Chapter xxvii. In this last place she writes as follows:

In this colloquy God makes the understanding attentive, even against its will, so that it understands what is said to it, for the soul now seems to have other ears with which it hears and He makes it listen and prevents it from becoming distracted. It is like a person with good hearing, who is forbidden to stop his ears when people near him are talking in a loud voice: even if he were unwilling to hear them, he could not help doing so. As a matter of fact, he does play a part in the process, because he is attending to what they are saying. But in this experience the soul does nothing, for even the mere insignificant ability to listen, which it has possessed until now, is taken from it. It finds all its food cooked and eaten: it has nothing to do but enjoy it. It is like one who, without having learned anything, or having taken the slightest trouble in order to learn to read, or even ever having studied, finds himself in possession of all existing knowledge; he has no idea how or whence it has come, since he has never done any work, even so much as was necessary for the learning of the alphabet.

This last comparison, I think, furnishes some sort of explanation of this heavenly gift, for the soul suddenly finds itself learned, and the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, together with other lofty things, is so clearly explained to it that there is no theologian with whom it would not have the boldness to contend in defence of the truth of these marvels.<sup>1</sup>

16. Hence it comes to pass that to some contemplatives it seems as if neither the understanding nor the will is working, not because they are not working, as the holy Mother confesses in many places, as does this same author in many parts of his writings which I shall afterwards note down, but because there is no discursive operation and no labour, but the soul enjoys complete quiet. And, as Saint Augustine admirably says in his book *De Quantitate animæ*, Chapter xxxiii, treating of the same works of the soul according to the seven degrees which he had distinguished: *Fieri potest ut hæc omnia simul agat anima sed id solum sibi agere videatur quod agit cum difficultate aut agit cum timore, agit enim multo quam ceteræ attentior*. And in this degree of prayer the soul works without any labour, as Saint Augustine himself says in the twelfth book of his *De Genesi ad litteram* and the holy Fray Tomás de Villanueva says in the place already cited (folio 22, p. 2): *Intus sine labore videntur*. Furthermore, as Father Gracián opines in the passages aforementioned, if the contemplative continues in the same act, which is not repellent to him, though difficult, he does not seem to be perceiving that he is working, as Father Suárez says in the same book

<sup>1</sup> [C.W.S.T.J., I, 173.]

(Book II, Chapter x, No. 13). His opinion is supported by a passage from Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires, in folio 123 of the said book. He relates that Saint Antony said: *Eum qui perfecte orat non intelligere se aliquid petere*, and adds:

Non enim orans super se reflectitur, non componit aut dividit, sed puro simplici amoris actu soporatur cum Propheta dicens: In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam, etc.

17. From this point follows the second—namely, that many others say that the soul should conduct itself passively herein, because in almost everything it is the Holy Spirit Who now works; but it appears that the soul suffers, and that it works, as was said by Father-Master Fray Luis de León in the words which I quoted above (§ 15) and also Father Suárez in the said book (Book II, Chapter xii, No. 18) where he says:

Est ergo vitalis illa passio, unde non est sine intellectus et voluntatis efficientia. Denominatur autem potius actio quam passio quia principalis motor ibi est spiritus, quia tunc agit per specialissimum auxilium internum, per dona sua, et non tantum per ordinarium modum operandi virtutibus accommodatum.

And in No. 19 he has a passage which is in agreement with what is contained in the number following.

This is also admirably explained by Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires in the book aforementioned (folio 96):

Et ut facilius intelligas quid sit unio animæ cum Deo, scias velim duplicem esse animæ cum Deo unionem per amorem: quædam enim est habitualis, altera actualis: hæc vero duplex: altera activa, quando quilibet nititur Deo semper adesse in intellectu voluntatemque suam semper ad ejus amorem inclinât, aut saltem ardentissimis ad id desideriis abundat; altera passiva, de qua dicit Bernardus, rara hora et brevis mora. Aug. 10 'Confessionum,' cap. 40, aliquando (ait) intromittis me in affectum multum inusitatum introrsus, ad nescio quam dulcedinem quæ si perficiatur in me nescio quid erit quod vita ista non erit, sed recido in hæc ærumnosa ponderibus et resorbeor solitis et teneor et multum fleo sed multum teneor . . . hic esse valeo, nec volo; illic volo nec valeo,<sup>1</sup> sed quamvis hæc fervens dilectio eliciatur a voluntate, dicitur tamen passiva, quia ad illam non excitat voluntas seipsam, velut ad primam, sed immediate excitatur a Deo fortiter fitque regulariter ac placide cum excessu quodam ac suspensione sensuum, estque mirum in modum dulcis et paucis conferre solet.

<sup>1</sup> Migne, *Patr. lat.*, Vol. XXXII, p. 807.

18. Finally, there follows from this the judgment of the same mystical theologians that the soul at this time must allow itself to be guided by the spirit without carrying on any further reasonings, without resisting the spirit and without intermingling any operations of its own. The holy Mother says this in many places which have been quoted and the famous theologian Francisco Suárez (*op. cit.*, Book II, Chapter xii, No. 19), expounding those words of Saint Dionysius: *Ut prætermittat sensus et mentis actiones*, says as follows:

Vel certe etiam intelligit omnem actionem aliquo modo propriam ipsius hominis, a proprio sensu profectam, et quasi propria inquisitione inchoatam: nam cum anima in altissima contemplatione a Spiritu Sancto movetur, non debet aliquid propriæ actionis miscere, sed Spiritus Sancti ductum sequi, quamvis id efficiat sine vera efficientia, et cooperatione, ut dixi. Et in hoc sensu intelligendus est Dionysius quoties agit de illo gradu perfectionis in quo anima sancta potius patitur quam agit.

This doctrine is very different from that of the Illuminists, who say that in this state of resignation the soul must allow itself to be guided and must itself do nothing. In the first place, what they call resignation and union is a knavery, illusion and imagination of their own and has nothing to do with this other union, wherein there is no deception, as will be said in discussing the sixth proposition. Secondly, the Illuminists do not exclude from their rule any works whatsoever; but advise those who are in that state of resignation to abstain even from works which are good and of obligation, so that that state is nothing but a form of idleness and a training-ground for their gross habits. The mystics exclude operations which belong to reasoning and operations which the subject performs of his own accord, as is explained by Father Suárez, and these they exclude only during the period of perfect contemplation, wherein the soul receives such great illumination from God that it knows with certainty that it is not being deceived.

19. The third part of the proposition is that, when it has reached this point of sublime contemplation, the soul takes no pleasure in discursive reasoning or meditation, but desires only to enjoy that quiet which it possesses and to engage neither in discursive reasoning nor in meditation. This is the express doctrine of the holy Mother in the *Book of her Life* (Chapter vii) where she says that, however much it desire to do so, the understanding cannot speak, save with great difficulty; and in the *Interior Castle* (VI, vii),

There are some people (and a great many have spoken to me about this) on whom Our Lord bestows perfect contemplation and who would like to

remain in possession of it for ever. That is impossible; but they retain something of this Divine favour, with the result that they can no longer meditate upon the mysteries of the Passion and the life of Christ, as they could before. I do not know the reason for this, but it is quite a common experience in such cases for the understanding to be less apt for meditation. I think the reason must be that the whole aim of meditation is to seek God, and once He is found, and the soul grows accustomed to seeking Him again by means of the will, it has no desire to fatigue itself with intellectual labour.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, she writes in the same chapter :

Here the reply may be made that the soul could not meditate even if it would, and, if we understand by meditation what generally goes by that name, this may perhaps be very true. If we were to take any one of the stations of the Passion—let us say the arrest of Our Lord—and meditate upon this mystery, thinking upon all that is contained in it, this is an admirable and most meritorious prayer; but I think those who have attained to perfect contemplation could not do this, though why, I do not know.<sup>2</sup>

The same doctrine is taught by Father-Master Fray Luis de León in the note reproduced above (§ 15), and also by Father Suárez (*op. cit.*, Book II, Chapters xvi ff.) where he recognizes the difficulty experienced by the soul in practising other operations and in allowing itself to be diverted to others when it is enjoying the contemplation aforementioned. With regard to this, let us consider the words of the holy Fray Tomás de Villanueva, in his commentary on the *Songs* (folio 124, p. 1): *Cum sic spiritus loquitur omnis littera fastiditur*. Let this word *fastiditur* be carefully considered; this author says that, when the soul is engaged in that contemplation, and fully occupied with it, and takes no delight in reading and meditation, it is no longer necessary that it should do so, for reading and meditation were a preparation for that which it is now enjoying. The same doctrine is taught by Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (*op. cit.*, folio 120) where he says :

Amor enim unit, rapit, satisfacit. Est autem raptus vehemens elevatio, fortisque actuatio superioris potentiæ; tunc enim cessant operationes inferiorum potentiarum, vel saltem ita debilitantur, et arescunt, ut superiorem potentiam in suis actionibus nequaquam impediunt, aut remorentur. Extasis autem quæ proprie ad solum pertinet intellectum, fit quando intellectus in sui ipsius actu suspenditur, ut potentiæ inferiores etiam eadem ratione penitus

<sup>1</sup> [C.W.S.T.J., II, 305.]

<sup>2</sup> [This passage is not an exact quotation, but a summarized version of a paragraph from *Interior Castle*, VI, vii, which will be found in full in C.W.S.T.J., II, 306-7.]

ab actionibus suis cessent; evenit raptus tam in potentiis cognoscitivis quam in affectiva. Nam rapit aliquando vis imaginativa super omnes vires sensitivas et exteriores, ut ipsæ nihil curare videantur, et reipsa non curent, propria objecta ab illis præsentata: ut patet in melancolicis et vehementibus et in amantibus: et regulariter vehemens aliquis amor, aut alia animi perturbatio raptus hujus debet esse causa. Ratio etiam quandoque rapitur super omnes sensus, quod fit quando aliquis ex vehementi affectu seu appetitu vacat perscrutationibus quidditatum aut veritatum abstrahentium a motu et materia, et conatur ex notis ignota ratiocinari. Evenit enim sapissime, ut is, qui rapitur si solum cesset ab operationibus sensuum exteriorum, ita ut omnino ignoret quid extra fiat, sed etiam virtuti phantasticæ ac imaginativæ actio sua penitus denegetur: adeo ut phantasma nullum irruere valeat, aut si irruat, non rationis voluntatisque superioris virtute prematur. Fit enim raptus in simplici intelligentia non solum supra omnes vires sensitivas, sed etiam super omnem ratiocinationem, quod contingit, cum apex mentis ita fortiter actuatur in simplici intuitu alicujus intelligibilis spiritualis, præsertim Dei, ut omnem aliam cognitionem extinguat ac sopiat: dicitur hæc anagogica ductio, et mentis excessus, mors animæ vivente spiritu, mors Rachelis in partu Benjamin, et hujusmodi raptus fit solum erga Deum, ex raptu affectus ad eundem.

20. From what has been said it will now be evident that the doctrine of this proposition is not that which is taught by the Illuminists—namely, that thoughts must be set aside in this state, even though they be good ones. Our author does not say this, but only that the soul takes no pleasure in meditating and working with the imagination, for meditation is no longer necessary to it, and may indeed rather be a hindrance, as the holy Mother says in Chapter iii of her *Fourth Mansions*, and in Chapter xxxi of the *Way of Perfection*. She says here that, during a period of this kind of prayer, meditation is like a heap of logs placed indiscriminately on the fire in order to quench the spark of contemplation.

Nor is the doctrine contained in this proposition the doctrine of the Illuminists that the soul must resign itself into the hands of God, because if it desires to engage in any work it will become incapable of the works of this love. In the first place, the restriction imposed by this love when the soul has reached this point of perfect prayer and contemplation and union, the Illuminists wish to apply to anyone who gives himself to prayer. In the second place, it is clear which are the works that, according to our author, have to be avoided in this state of contemplation. Furthermore, the Illuminists exclude good works and works of obligation while they remain in that state of

slloth which they call prayer and resignation and which is quite remote from the doctrine of this author.

Finally, this author does not exclude good and holy works, or the affections of virtues, nor does he speak of these, but only of meditation and discursive reasoning during the time of perfect contemplation, and this only as applied to those who are quite accustomed to it and who are commonly wont to remain incapable of meditation and discourse, as described in the passage which I quoted from the holy Mother. Nor do they always cease from making use of meditation in order to awaken their souls to a new enkindling, according to the words of David: *Et in meditatione mea exardescet ignis*. And because meditation serves to awaken the soul when it is cold or asleep or lukewarm, it cannot be inferred that, when the affections have been excited and the understanding is moved by God through simple knowledge and love of the will, meditation is of any importance, any more than the framework of an arch is of importance when the arch is completed. To say this is not to depreciate meditation, but to describe the time and the season at which it performs its office, and to state when it is not necessary, since all things, however good they be, have their reason and their time.

21. I add, furthermore, so that it may be perfectly well understood how we are to judge those who say that other good thoughts which may present themselves within this type of prayer are hindrances to contemplation, an admirable doctrinal passage from that apostolic teacher Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (*op. cit.*, folio 97):

Multorum sententiæ fuit, hanc unionem quamvis pura esset, a quibuscumque imaginibus posse impedire, licet essent imagines ipsæ utiles, quæ animam ipsam disposuerant; ut imagines misteriorum humanitatis Christi, et etiam divinorum attributorum: hoc tamen caute intelligendum est, ne erroris existat occasio. Si enim intelligamus has imagines, dum se offerunt intellectui animæ immediate quiescentis, ac fruētis unione divina pura, non esse tenaciter recipiendas, nec morose eo temporis articulo illis vacandum, aut rebus quæ illæ repræsentant, sed revera claudendos esse ad eas mentis oculos, regulariter loquendo, verum hoc fateamur necesse est; divertere enim ad eas morose impedit progressum immediate unionis cum Deo. Si autem intelligamus has imagines quotiescumque occurrunt pure contemplanti, atque amanti Deum, impedire hebetareque vigorem ac perfectionem unionis, credo esse falsum; experientia enim constat hoc sæpe evenire, dum homo in solum Deum toto mentis actu fertur; fit enim, ut eo tempore raptim occurrat intellectui hæc imago, videlicet, hic Deus pro me homo factus est, aut crucifixus; hæ namque imagines non solum non impediunt, verum etiam

promovere et augere solent unionem amoris atque admirationis suspensive; immo neque imago peccatorum raptim transiens, officiet, videlicet: hic Deus tot crimina pro sua benignitate condonavit . . . etc. Sæpe etiam contingit quod dum unio tepescit, rursum sponte ignoscat, si mentem applices ad media salutifera scilicet ad Christi passionem.

This single passage gives the true sense in which this doctrine is to be understood and removes all doubt concerning it, and in the blessed Father Fray John of the Cross no argument will be found that verges upon that false interpretation, which, as we have said, must be set aside.

I have gone into this proposition at such length because the majority of those that are to be examined hereafter may be reduced to it, and by what has been said the objections to the fourth and fifth propositions are answered.

#### PROPOSITIONS IV, V, VI

(Vol. I, p. 206)

**In treating of the formal and substantial locutions which God grants to certain souls, the author writes as follows: ‘The soul should itself do nothing and desire nothing at the time, but conduct itself with resignation and humility, giving its free consent to God; neither should it reject anything nor fear anything. It should not labour in executing what these words express, for by these substantial words God is working in it and with it, wherein they differ from formal and successive words. It should not reject them, since the effect of these words remains substantially within it and is full of the good which comes from God. As the soul receives this good passively, its action is at no time of any importance. Nor should it fear any deception, for neither the understanding nor the devil can intervene herein.’**

22. All this doctrine is certain and true, and that this may be clearly seen I divide it into four parts. The first part says that there exist these interior and substantial locutions of God, which are so called by the mystics, not because they are produced immediately in the substance of the soul, without any labour of the understanding, but because God produces them immediately, without the mediation of any creature, and because of the profound impression of the effects which they produce. That these locutions come to spiritual persons to whom God is pleased to grant His favour, there is no doubt. This is the express doctrine of Saint Gregory (*Morals*, Book V, Chapter ccxix) and of

Saint Bernard's commentary on the *Songs* (Sermon 54). These testimonies I shall quote shortly.

23. The second part of this proposition says that the soul must not work at this time, but must allow itself to be guided by God, giving its free consent to Him with all humility. The following considerations may be urged against those who condemn this teaching, the sense of which, as will be seen, they have not fathomed. According to this author the soul in this state does in fact work, for to give its consent and to humble itself is nothing less than to work with the will. Besides this he says that it hears these locutions of God, and to hear is a work of the understanding. Let it also be observed what this author affirms in Proposition XXVIII, where he says that the soul in this state has merit, and in Proposition XXIX, which says that the soul sees the beauty and the gifts of God, and also that the soul at this time has love for God and praises Him, none of which things can come to pass apart from the operation of the soul. And let these words from the same proposition also be noted: the soul's action consists in looking at God's beauty in everything, and therefore there is such action.

This author, then, does not deny that there are some kinds of work performed by the soul, but only that it reasons and meditates and labours (of which we have already spoken under Proposition III), which operations may cause hindrance in this supreme state of quiet, as is said by Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (*op. cit.*, folio 90, p. 2) even of good images:

Immo tempore unionis inter Deum et animam, quæcumque (licet bonæ) imagines sunt procul expellendæ, quia sunt mediæ inter utrumque; ideo athleta huc pervenire cupiens, Deo ipsum trahente atque vocante, cum primum senserit se divino amore vehementer inflammari, ac sursum trahi, propterea rescindat quaslibet imagines, festinetque ad sancta sanctorum, et ad internum illud silentium in quæ non humana sed divina dumtaxat est operatio, ibi enim Deus ipse est agens, homo vero patiens. Nam dum vires animæ silent, et a propria actione quiescunt, atque ab omni denique externa imagine liberæ sunt, Deus ipse loquitur: easque mentis vires pro libito disponit, et afficit nobilissimum opus in ea peragens.

This makes it clear in what sense this author says that the soul must behave passively, and the same language is used by this Father in words already quoted, which have been expounded in our discussion of Proposition III (§ 17).

And Father Suárez (*op. cit.*, Book XX, Chapter xii) explains how the mystical doctors are to be understood when they declare that

these locutions are not produced without the soul's activity, and that the soul works not in them (cf. §§ 21, 22). In that silence which takes place in the soul at that time, the passions and operations of sense, described by Saint Gregory and Saint Bernard, are not called works, as the holy Mother says likewise in the *Book of her Life*, Chapter xx. And thus it is impossible to deduce from this doctrine the conclusion reached by one who objects that the soul is justified without acts, since in reality the soul is working here, as this author says. It is true that certain Catholic doctors are of the opinion that in this state of contemplation the soul is not working freely, and that the soul might therefore not have merit; but in my own view the contrary opinion is the more credible—namely, that the will is free in this state and that the soul has merit. This may be deduced from the words of Saint Augustine in Book XII of his *De Genesi ad litteram* (at the end of Chapter xv)<sup>1</sup> and it is the doctrine of the holy Mother in Chapter xxvi of the *Way of Perfection*, and in folio 377 of the *Conceptions of the Love of God*, and of our author in the proposition here noted.

24. The third part of the proposition says that when these locutions take place the soul must not labour, because God is working in it by means of these substantial words, so that, if He were to say to the soul 'Love Me,' the soul would at once love Him. Here God is uttering truths, the first of which is that these locutions of His are practical and efficacious. This is the doctrine of Saint Bernard, in his commentary on the *Songs* (Sermon 55): *Verbo q.<sup>o</sup> dicere anima pulchra est et appellare animam infundere est unde amet et se præsumat amari.*<sup>2</sup> This clearly agrees with our author and with the holy Fray Tomás de Villanueva in his commentary on the *Songs* (folio 124): *Quod etiam in hac vita in sanctis impleri existimo, quando non jam per scripturas, sed per se ipsum loquitur eos, et impletur quod scriptum est: erunt omnes docibiles Dei. Cum sic spiritus loquitur, omnis littera fastiditur.* This is likewise the teaching of the holy Mother in Chapter xxv of the *Book of her Life*, and in the third chapter of the *Sixth Mansions*, where she says: 'The first and surest sign (that a locution is of God) is the power and authority that it bears with it, both in themselves and in the actions which follow them.'<sup>3</sup> . . . And the same doctrine is put forward by Fray Alonso de Orozco in his book entitled *Mount of Contemplation* (folio 138, p. 1). From this it follows, first, that, as our author says, the soul

<sup>1</sup> Migne, *Patr. lat.*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 466.

<sup>2</sup> [This quotation comes from Sermon 45, and should read: 'Verbo igitur dicere animam, pulchra es, et appellare amicam, infundere, etc.']

<sup>3</sup> [C.W.S.T.J., II, 280.]

must not labour when it is in that state, because, as God is the chief agent, it works without the least difficulty or labour, but with great pleasure, as I proved from the teaching of the saints in discussing Proposition III (§ 16). From this, too, it is evident how true is the teaching of this author that the effect<sup>1</sup> of these words becomes substantiated, and thus it must not be cast aside, as is affirmed by the saints whom we have quoted and by the holy Mother in the Sixth Mansions (Chapter ix).

25. The fourth part of the proposition is that the soul in this state must fear no deception because the devil cannot meddle with it. Two things are said with respect to this, the first of which is that these locutions of God give the soul great security. This security, I find, is often described by the saints. Consider the holy Fray Tomás de Villanueva in his commentary on the *Songs* (folio 123, p. 1): *Secura dormire potest, quæ tale meruit reperire cervical*. And in the next column he says:

Læva capiti superponitur ne collidatur; dextera totum hominem amplexatur ne vel leviter moveatur; optima dextera, bona sinistra; inter has manus, secura dormit, testimonium habens a Spiritu Sancto quia vel amplexata non cadet, vel lapsa non peribit; non hominum est hoc testimonium, sed ejus qui charitate languet: charitatem languor languorem securitas sequitur.

And again (folio 123): *Est cellarium securitatis, pacis, de quo Apostolus: Pax Dei quæ exuperat omnem sensum*. This is also the teaching of Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (folio 176, p. 1): *Hos effectus prædictos sequuntur alii duo, scilicet, securitas qua nihil anima timet pati propter Deum, et qua certissime confidit, se nunquam ab eo separandam*. And again (folio 180, p. 1): *Experitur insuper in se ipsa quoddam strictissimum divinæ amicitiae vinculum, adeo firmum, ut separari nunquam ab eo se posse existimet*. This teaching is also found in the Fifth Mansions of the holy Mother (Chapter i) and Fray Luis de León expounds this in one of his glosses. The second point is that the soul must not fear the devil, who cannot intervene in that sublime state of contemplation, neither can he enter the soul and deceive it in intellectual visions, although he can do so in corporeal visions. This is the express doctrine of Saint Augustine (*De Genesi ad litteram*, Book XXII, Chapters iii, xiii-xiv, xxxi) and the same thing is taught by Saint Thomas (2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>æ</sup>, Q. 180, A. 6), in these words:

Et in hac operatione animæ non est error; sicut patet quod circa intellectum primorum principiorum non erratur, quæ simplici intuitu cognoscimus.

<sup>1</sup> [The Spanish has *afecto*, 'affection,' an obvious error for *efecto*.

And this is expounded by Father Suárez (*op. cit.*, Book II, Chapter x, No. 6). It is also the doctrine of the holy Mother (*Interior Castle*, VI, Chapters ix-x; *Life*, Chapter xxviii). And it is also affirmed by Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (folio 93, p. 1), where he says:

Ne vero quid suspectum habeat dum luce cælesti consolationeque interna plenius affluit, certe sciat, lumen illud quod in animæ centro lucet, et quo quis Dei bonitatem et propriam sui vilitatem cognoscens in vera proficit humilitate, non a spiritu maligno sed a Deo mirifice infundi. Diabolus namque solet vanos superbosque homines decipere, confictum lumen et falsam ingerens dulcedinem, sed assentiam animæ solus Deus ingredi potest.

From all these places we may deduce the reason for this truth, which is expounded by a number of authors—namely, that contemplation is simple apprehension and that thus there can be no deception in it, which is the reason followed by Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas. Others attribute this to the fact that the devil cannot work immediately in the soul but only by means of bodily or imaginary images, and thus intellectual images must be free from his deceptions.

## PROPOSITIONS VII, VIII

(Vol. I, p. 207)

**In treating of the various feelings which the soul may have, this author says: ‘The soul may have certain most sublime spiritual feelings, which neither the soul nor he that treats with it can know, nor can they understand the cause whence they proceed, or what are the acts whereby God may grant it these favours; for they depend not upon any works performed by the soul, nor upon its meditations.’**

26. It is most certain that this most lofty degree of contemplation depends not upon human diligence as upon due or infallible merits. This is what our author says, as I proved above (§ 13), and it is the express doctrine of the holy Mother in Chapter xiii of the *Book of her Life*. It is also that of Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (*op. cit.*, folio 107, p. 2; folio 130, p. 1):

Habeto ergo pro certo in sola charitate esse regnum Dei, gratiam autem contemplationis inter cæteras gratias gratis datas computato.

And thus this author does not deny the good works whereby the soul makes itself meet for the favours of God, for throughout his book he

teaches the practice of the virtues and the purification of the earthly affections and of self-love. Nor is it possible to father upon him the proposition of the Illuminists, who say that, when we are in contemplation, we are not to do good works, even though they be commanded us, for this has no connection with the teaching of our author. For as the feelings of which we have spoken may come to pass in the soul passively without its doing anything effectively on its own part to receive them, so the knowledge of them is received passively in the understanding, and the soul must do nothing on its own part, lest it go astray, but must conduct itself passively.

27. The whole of this proposition is expounded in our discussion of Proposition III (§ 17); where it is defended and explained by means of the doctrine of Catholic doctors and saints, who show in what manner it is to be understood that the soul must conduct itself passively and not work. And here should be noted this phrase of our author 'on its own part,' which shows clearly that he is speaking according to the exposition given by Father Suárez (*op. cit.*, Book II, Chapter ii), which I have discussed above (§§ 17-18).

## PROPOSITION IX

(Vol. I, pp. 212-13)<sup>1</sup>

**'It is necessary that, in each of these books, the reader should bear in mind the purpose of which we are speaking. . . . For, seeing how we annihilate the faculties with respect to their operations, it may perhaps seem to him that we are destroying the road of spiritual practice rather than constructing it. This would be true if we were seeking here only to instruct beginners, who are best prepared through these apprehensible and discursive operations. But, since we are here giving instruction to those who would progress farther in contemplation, even to union with God, to which end all these means and exercises of sense concerning the faculties must recede into the background, since God Himself is working Divine union in the soul, it is necessary to proceed by this method of disencumbering and emptying the soul, and causing it to reject the natural jurisdiction and operations of the faculties, so that they may become capable of infusion and illumination from supernatural sources.'**

<sup>1</sup> [In several places this passage is incorrectly quoted from the *editio princeps*.]

28. The whole of the teaching in this proposition has already been discussed under Proposition III (§ 19). Since discursive meditation, *maxime in ipso tempore contemplationis*, is of no use to the most perfect souls that engage in contemplation, we make a distinction between two parts of this proposition, to the end that this may become more evident. The first part says that contemplation is the work of those that are perfect, which is asserted by Father Suárez (*op. cit.*, Book II, Chapter xi) and is repeated by spiritual persons so frequently that it is unnecessary to quote examples. The second part says that discursive meditation is needless in this state, and this I proved at length in discussing Proposition III (§ 19), quoting the doctrine of saints and doctors upon it. It is therefore a notable injustice to seek to father upon our author, in this and similar propositions, opinions which were condemned in the Council of Vienne, on the subject of the imperfect who practise works of virtue; or the saying of the Illuminists that it is all the same whether one prays or prays not; or the opinion, condemned by Father Gracián, that the soul must not perform works of virtue. There is not a word in our author denying works of virtue to the contemplative; he only denies him discursive meditation when he is in that state of contemplation, *et tempore unionis et meditationis cum Deo*. This is as if he had said that reading must be laid aside when the soul attains to contemplation and love, because reading was only a means to awaken the soul that it might attain that end.

## PROPOSITIONS X, XI

(Vol. I, p. 248)

**In maintaining that the soul must not rejoice in temporal blessings, this author says: 'It is also a vain thing for men to desire to have children, as do some who trouble and disturb everyone with their desire for them, for they know not if such children will be good or if the satisfaction for which they hope from them will be turned into pain.'**

29. These propositions have been expounded and defended in treating of Proposition III. No truth is more frequently repeated by the saints than this: that temporal blessings must not be desired with particular affection, but that all things must be left to the will of God, and to this class belong children born of marriage. Thus this author

does not here condemn or belittle marriage, but only undue affection. This is likewise the teaching of the holy Mother in the first chapter of the *Way of Perfection*, where, after treating of this matter, she ends by saying 'that, were it not necessary to consider human frailty . . . I should like it to be understood that it is not for things like these that God should be importuned with such anxiety.'<sup>1</sup> The gloss of Father-Master Fray Luis de León on this passage gives its meaning as being that if we ask for temporal things, especially in times of greatest necessity, we must be careful to do so only as accessories.

## PROPOSITION XII

(Vol. I, p. 292)

In describing the use of images by the spiritual man this author says: 'The devout person sets his devotion principally upon that which is invisible. He needs few images, and uses few, and chooses those that harmonize with the Divine rather than with the human, clothing them, and with them himself, in the garments of the world to come, and following its fashions rather than those of this world. For not only does an image belonging to this world in no way influence his desire; it does not even lead him to think of this world.'

30. It is not possible to father the doctrine of the Illuminists on this author, for in this same chapter, by means of Catholic doctrine, he clearly teaches the respect which we owe to images and the part they play in the Church. He merely says that images are not necessary to the contemplative for his practice of contemplation; previously he has expressly admitted them, but he says that, at the time of contemplation, the affections are already enkindled, and therefore images are then of no use to him since he has truth itself. This is not condemning the use of images, but merely pointing out that they are of little use at that particular time. This is similar to the teaching of Gerson, in his opusculum *De Mystica Theologia*, Chapter iv, where he asks: *An perturbet devotionem internam excessumque mentalem vocalis cantus ecclesiasticus?* And he answers: *Quod re ipsa verum esse videtur et experientia testatur.* And this is confirmed and proved and expounded by Fray Bartolomé

<sup>1</sup> *Way of Perfection*, chap. i (C.W.S.T.J., II, 5).

de los Mártires (*op. cit.*, folio 127, p. 2). Furthermore, in this proposition our author condemns the secular clothing with which images are adorned—a thing which has been rebuked in many councils.

### PROPOSITIONS XIII, XIV

Here we have also a defence of Proposition XIII, in which is condemned, besides the things aforementioned, carnal affection for the possession of images, in the sense wherein one might condemn the same kind of affection for the possession of anything. This is referred to in the teaching of Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (*op. cit.*, folio 74, p. 1): *Nihil tenaci corde possideas, nulli creaturæ mente inhæreas*, and in the other passage which I have quoted above (§ 12). Together with these it is well that the spiritual man should also study the words used by the aforementioned Father (*op. cit.*, folio 32): *Non habeas curiosa et superflua, quia distrahunt et occupant cor; quare nolim affectes habere imagines tabulas curiose depictas*.

By the same argument may be defended Proposition XIV, where this author condemns the grossness of the sentiments of those who set their trust in images, saying that they should rather set it in the Divine efficacy which works through such or such an image, considered as an instrument, more than through another, all of which is Catholic doctrine and is that taught by this author. And thus this author condemns not the devotion to particular sanctuaries, but explains how and by whom this devotion must be expressed so that it may be effective. Here, in my view, he takes his stand upon the doctrine that an image and prototype is not capable of receiving respect, adoration or invocation, which is the doctrine of Father Gabriel Vázquez in his book *De Adoratione Imaginum*, and is followed by other learned men in Spain.

This is the clear meaning of this author, as is seen in the words which follow, to which this proposition refers. He says that when God sometimes grants more favours by means of one image than by means of another of the same kind, the reason, although there may in fact be a great difference in the workmanship of the two images, is that those who use them may have their devotion awakened by means of one rather than by means of another. Wherefore the reason why God works miracles and grants favours by means of certain images rather than by means of others is that this practice awakens the sleeping devotion and

affection of the faithful, and, when devotion is enkindled and prayer is persevered in by means of an image, this is a means by which God hears the prayer and grants that which is besought of Him. And by the instrumentality of that image, through the soul's prayer and affection, God continues to grant favours and miracles, for the soul that has devotion to the image has it also to the Saint which that image represents. This is also the sense of Propositions XV and XVI.

## PROPOSITIONS XV, XVI, XVII

(Vol. I, p. 331)

**'The loving mother is like the grace of God, for, as soon as the soul is regenerated by its new fervour for the service of God, He treats it in the same way; He makes it to find spiritual milk, sweet and delectable, in all the things of God, without any labour of its own, and also great pleasure in spiritual exercises, for here God is giving it the breast of His tender love, even as to a tender child. Therefore, such a soul has its delight in spending long periods—perchance whole nights—in prayer. Penances are its pleasures, fasts its joys, and its consolations are to make use of the sacraments and to occupy itself in Divine things. In the which things spiritual persons (though taking part in them with great efficacy and persistence and using and treating them with great care) often find themselves, spiritually speaking, very weak and imperfect. For they are moved to these spiritual exercises by the consolation and pleasure that they find in them.'**

31. This author does not condemn good works done because of the spiritual pleasure which the soul takes in them, and from devotion, but merely says that to work from that motive is imperfection. This is not to condemn the thing as bad, for there are good things and better things, and Divine providence, in order to move the affections of beginners, is wont at first to communicate such pleasures to them; and this is the common teaching of spiritual men and saints. I know not, therefore, what this proposition can have to do with the saying of the Illuminists that works done for charity are not done for love of God. To say that to do works because of that pleasure and consolation is to work imperfectly is not to say that it is bad, for, even though it be not done expressly from the love of God, it is done for that reason remotely,

inasmuch as the particular good is ordered according to the universal good. By saying that a work is imperfect, or is not as perfect as others, one does not condemn it as bad, just as it is not a condemnation of marriage as bad if we say that it is not as perfect as celibacy, nor is it a condemnation of acting *propter retributionem* if we say that perfection consists in working for God alone without looking at the reward.

And that this is the clear meaning of this author is shown by the words which follow the passage quoted from Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (*op. cit.*, folio 53, p. 2). He says that God sometimes denies the soul these comforts *ut probemur an stipendio consolationum solum ducti Domino serviamus*. It is therefore not perfection to serve God for the sake of these pleasures and consolations; such works are the works of children, or of weak and imperfect people, who engage in exercises of prayer and in the sacraments from motives of devotion, pleasures and comforts of sense, and who nearly forsake God when aridity comes to their souls. It is of these that God says in the Gospel: *Qui cum gaudio suscipiunt verbum Dei et in tempore tentationis recedunt*. Cf. Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (*op. cit.*, folios 84, 124, 183). Nor does this proposition reject outward practice of the virtues, though it says that contemplation is better. I give the words of Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (folio 82, p. 2):

Exercitia enim externa quamvis bona ac pia sint, tamen multo majoris momenti censenda est exercitatio interna, qua homo ardentissime ad Deum non per sensus aut imagines, sed modo quodam supernaturali ita consurgit, ut illi uniatur.

## PROPOSITION XVIII

(Vol. I, pp. 338-9)

'It often comes to pass that in their very spiritual exercises, when they are powerless to prevent it, there arise and are felt in the sensual part of the soul unclean motions, and sometimes this happens even when the spirit is deep in prayer, or engaged in the Sacrament of Penance or in the Eucharist. These things are not, as I say, in their power; they proceed from one of three things. The first cause from which they occasionally proceed (albeit rarely and in weak natures) is the pleasure which nature takes in spiritual things. For when the spirit and the sense are pleased, every part of a man is moved by that pleasure to delight

according to its proportion and nature. For then the spirit, which is the higher part, is moved to pleasure and delight in God, and the sensual nature, which is the lower part, is moved to pleasure and delight of the senses.'

32. This proposition requires more detailed consideration than others, as it is very subtle; truth or error may result from a single word expressed in one way or in another. In the first place, I assume that it is a sound doctrine agreed upon among spiritual men that the spirit in which sensual movements have their birth is not a good spirit, nor is any other that incites to evil, as the holy Mother teaches in her book, giving this as a sign of the evil spirit in the seventh of her *Maxims* which are included in the compendium of the degrees of prayer. This is a truth so certain and so generally agreed upon that nobody who possesses the light of reason can assert the contrary, still less a spiritual man of so miraculous a life. In the second place, I assume that it sometimes happens that when the soul is enjoying the most sublime contemplation, other than ecstasy, there arise certain sensual motions in the flesh, and, in order that that state of prayer be not forthwith condemned and denounced as evil, it is well that this doctrine should be set down and understood so that it may be known that prayer and contemplation may be quite good and may come from God, and that at the same time such accidental occurrences may come to pass in the inferior part of the soul. Just so there was light on the summit of Mount Sinai, where Moses was, and at the foot of the mount there were smoke, darkness and quakings of the earth. Let not the spiritual man, then, be forthwith discouraged and afflicted and let him not suppose that his state of prayer is of the devil. It may be of God and yet this may happen, either because of some natural effect that is caused *ex accidenti* in the body, through weakness or heat or dilatation of the pores, or through the inspiration of the devil, who, since he cannot enter the loftiest place of contemplation, is anxious to cause such disturbances as he can. And sometimes these things will come to pass not only without any desire on the part of the contemplative, but even without his perception or knowledge, as happens in dreams, because the force with which the spiritual man is bound closely to his contemplation will not permit him to have knowledge of these movements or of any other exterior actions. And at other times when these things come to pass he will be conscious of them and will grieve greatly at them, as this author says, yet he will be unable to cure his affections

because of the weakness of the natural state of his body, although his soul gives no kind of consent to these things.

The saints whom we have as guides in the Church teach us this doctrine, especially Saint Gregory (*Morals*, Book X, Chapter x), where he expounds this text from Job: *Si subverterit omnia vel in unum coarctaverit quis contradicet ei?*

Sed tamen hanc importunis caro tentationibus impugnet. Cumque ad contemplanda cælestia animus ducitur objectis actionis illicitæ imaginibus reverberatur, nam carnis repente hunc stimulus sauciat quem extra carnem contemplatio sancta rapiebat; cælum ergo simul infernusque coarctatur cum unam eandemque mentem et sublevatio contemplationis illuminat, et importunitas tentationis obscurat, ut et videat intendendo quod appetat et succumbendo in cogitatione toleret quod erubescat; de cælo quippe lux oritur; infernus autem tenebris possidetur. In unum ergo cælum infernusque redigitur cum mens quæ jam lucem patriæ supernæ considerat, etiam de carnis bello occultæ tentationis portat.<sup>1</sup>

And Saint John Climacus, in his fifteenth chapter, which is of chastity, says these notable words:

Let us diligently scrutinize and examine ourselves when we are singing psalms and assisting at the Divine offices, as to the sweetness and pleasure which we sometimes feel on those occasions, whether it is of the spirit of God or of the evil spirit, who sometimes intermeddles in these occupations. Desire not, O youth, to be ignorant, for the better knowledge of thyself and of thy business. For I once knew a case where certain people were praying for their friends and acquaintances, and the thought of them awakened a spark of impure love in their souls, without their being aware of the fact; they rather thought that they had been fulfilling the law of charity.

Of Saint Catherine of Siena it is written in her Life that she suffered such things even at the time of Communion, and, when the Saint was afflicted by this, God said to her: 'Wherefore art thou afflicted? If these things trouble thee, I am with thee.'

By this will be understood the teaching of this proposition. Our author does not say that these sensual motions arise immediately or *per se* from the spirit of the contemplation of God. He says that, at the time when the soul is conscious of the pleasure of contemplation, some sensual delight is wont to be felt in weak natures, and that this delight has its natural explanation in philosophy and medicine. For overmuch joy heats the body and dilates the pores, just as fear makes

<sup>1</sup> Migne, *Patr. lat.*, Vol. LXXV, p. 931.

the body cold and closes the pores. And thus what this author postulates is an effect of the weakness of the body and not of the grace and spirit of contemplation. And he says that this happens seldom and against the will of the person who experiences it, and indeed that it causes him displeasure. And he says that whoever experiences it at any time must take heed and not be unnecessarily afflicted or think that what was the result of a weak nature is due to an evil spirit. I do not know how this can be compared with what has been said and is said by the Illuminists concerning voluntary, not natural, motions; nor how it can be classed with the encouragement given by the advisers of the Illuminists to those who were their carnal rather than their spiritual children, for they would tell them that these gross things were overflowings from the spirit. In this author, however, I find them described as sensual motions not caused by the spirit, whereas in the Illuminists I find grossness described as being an effect of the spirit. In this author I find the motions attributed to the weakness of human nature; in the Illuminists they arise from the malice of the will. In this author I find them described as causing displeasure and pain to those who experience them; in the Illuminists I find that they are brought about by their own knavery. Let it be considered what possible similarity there can be between the one kind of teaching and the other.

### PROPOSITIONS XIX, XX, XXI, XXII, XXIII

Propositions XIX and XX have already been expounded under the head of Proposition III. Proposition XXI will be treated under the head of Proposition XXVII. Propositions XXII and XXIII come under Proposition III. There is thus no more to add concerning these.

### PROPOSITION XXIV

(Vol. I, p. 421)

**This author says that in the dark night of the soul the desires, both sensual and spiritual, 'are put to sleep and mortified, so that they can experience nothing, either Divine or human; the affections of the soul are oppressed and constrained, so that they can neither move nor find support in anything; the imagination is bound, and can make no useful reflection; the memory is**

gone, the understanding is in darkness, and hence the will likewise is arid and constrained and all the faculties are void; and in addition to all this a thick and heavy cloud is upon the soul, keeping it in affliction, and, as it were, far away from God.'

33. So that the censors may not think this an exaggeration of the aridities suffered by the soul, let them hear what Saint Bernard says in his third Sermon, *De Resurrectione*. *Sunt quæ nondum spirituali consolatione recepta, sed nisi brevitati fuissent dies quis posset sustinere?* The venerable Fray Alonso de Orozco (*Confessions*, Book II), treating of this same matter, says that the trials of the body are as it were blows upon the wall of the city, which come as it were from without, but the temptations of the spirit strike and wound the interior part of the soul from within and are more deeply felt. And the holy Mother says in the *Interior Castle* that there are many things in this state of prayer which combat the soul with interior affliction, and are felt so keenly and intolerably that she knows not to what she can compare it save to the sufferings of those that are in hell, for in this tempest comes no consolation.

#### PROPOSITION XXV

Part of this proposition, which deals with the cessation of the soul from working and with its passive conduct, has already been expounded under Proposition III (§§ 17, 18). As regards the part describing the possible entrance of the deception of the devil, this will be expounded under Proposition XXVI.

#### PROPOSITIONS XXVI, XXVII

(Vol. I, p. 454)

This author says that 'the two portions of the soul—the spiritual and the sensual—before they can go forth to the Divine union of love, must needs first be reformed, ordered and tranquillized with respect to the sensual and to the spiritual, according to the nature of the state of innocence which was Adam's, notwithstanding the fact that the soul is not free from the state of temptation which belongs to its lower part.'

34. This author here demands the purity which is necessary if the soul is to reach this contemplation and perfect union, whereof we have

spoken in § 9, proving our contention with the doctrine of the saints. This agrees with the doctrine of Fray Tomás de Villanueva (*op. cit.*, folio 122, p. 1): *Dextera totum hominem amplexatur ne vel leviter moveatur*. And also his words *post serenatam mentem et ab omni labe mundatam* (folio 124, p. 2). There is also a description of the purity which is necessary for this contemplation in Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (Book II, folio 90, p. 2):

Modicus enim amor, tenuisque affectus, quo quis mortali creaturæ adhæret, verbum otiose prolatum aut bucella panis, aliter quam oportet sumpta, et aliæ hujusmodi, licet minutulæ paleæ efficiunt, ut Deus, qui summæ puritatis est, non intimæ animæ uniatur, donec hæ ordinationes expientur.

The demands put forward by this author are even less than this; and, because he requires such purity in the higher part of the soul, he does not assume that the soul is now free from venial and mortal sins, since the lower part of the soul is left subject to temptations at the time of contemplation. And, apart from this, the powerful grace of God, as I said in my notes to the *Confessions* of Fray Alonso de Orozco (at the end of § 25), is able to preserve the purity of certain souls, so that, if they cannot free themselves of venial sins into which they fall through inadvertence, they nevertheless pass some part of their lives without venial sins which arise deliberately from the will. These are the express words of Father Suárez (*De Gratia*, Vol. II, Book VIII, Chapter ix, § 25):

Loquendo autem de solis peccatis venialibus, credi potest sanctos aliquantulum vel aliquoties interdum pervenire pro aliquo tempore vitæ ad tam perfectum gradum perfectionis, ut raro vel numquam illa committant.

And thus, if this author were to say that those whom God admits to so perfect a degree of contemplation are at that time and for a short time afterwards free from deliberate venial sins, he would be saying nothing against true Catholic doctrine.

This is quite different, then, from the doctrines and propositions of the Illuminists of Seville, who claimed to be free from mortal and venial sins, and to be confirmed in grace, though their lives were evil. This author says not that contemplatives are confirmed in grace nor that they are free from sin; but he rather subjects them to sin, since he affirms that the sensual part of the soul is subjected to the temptations of the devil. He affirms, then, that the soul will not reach this union so long as it commits such sins and has such vicious habits; but, as that

union is neither durable nor perpetual in this life, it follows not that the soul will not afterwards be subject to falls; in this way he demonstrates what purity it needs in order to reach this union with God.

## PROPOSITION XXVIII

(Vol. III, p. 18)

**This author says that ‘ the acts of love that the soul performs in this union with God are most precious, and even one of them is of greater merit than many more that the soul may have done apart from this transformation.’**

35. The teaching of this proposition is most certain and is confirmed by the words of the holy Fray Alonso de Orozco in the *Mount of Contemplation* (folio 136, p. 1). It even seems that one hour of so perfect an exercise, brief time though it be, is of greater worth than others spent in the contemplation of other things. And the words of Albertus Magnus (*De Adhærendo Deo*, Chapter v) are no less definite :

Quapropter si incipisti nudare et purificare a phantasmatibus et imaginibus, et simplicare et tranquillare fiducialiter in Domino Deo cor tuum et mentem tuam, ut haurias et sentias fontem divini beneplaciti in omnibus interioribus tuis et per bonam voluntatem sis Deo unitus in intellectu, sufficit tibi hoc pro omni studio et lectione sacræ scripturæ, et ad dilectionem Dei et proximi ut unctio docet.

The reason of this is clear, for in this perfect contemplation the affection of love grows and is more intense, and is thus more meritorious. And although the habit of grace is most necessary for the acquisition of merit, yet it is held by theologians to be a more probable doctrine that the increase of merit corresponds not to the intensity of this habit, but to the intensity of the act. And if this author says that there is greater merit from this love than there can be without this union, he does not thereby reduce the meritorious principle to union, or exclude charity, for it is clear that the soul cannot reach this union without grace and charity. Our author says that, in that state, through the loftiness of contemplation, the love of the soul grows and is increased, and its merit grows correspondingly; thus he assumes that the soul in this state has both charity and grace. He who begs for it cleanses his soul even of the slightest sins. Nor is it legitimate to infer from this pro-

position the teaching of the Illuminists of Medo—namely, that the soul that is in this state of relaxation has no need of prayer, recollection or anything else whatsoever.

## PROPOSITION XXIX

(Vol. III, p. 32)

**This author says that ‘in this state of union God permits the soul to see His beauty and entrusts it with the gifts and virtues that He has given it, and all this turns into love and praise, since there is no leaven to corrupt the mass.’**

36. This proposition has been defended and expounded under the head of Proposition XXVII. As I said, it does not admit impeccability or freedom to commit venial sins. It only demands the purity which is necessary for such union and this it calls freedom or the absence of corrupting leaven; but this neither signifies impeccability nor affirms it. Saint Paul demanded that we should be impeccable, like babes, when he said: *Expurgate vetus fermentum*; and when he added: *Sicut estis azyma*.<sup>1</sup> But he exhorted us only to greater purity.

To say that God grants the contemplative to see His beauty is not to say clearly that He permits him to see His Essence, as is objected by the censor, for He can reveal His beauty to the soul without allowing it to see His Essence, as we learn from that rapture described by Saint Augustine (*Confessions*, Book IX, Chapter x)<sup>2</sup> and from other authors. The majority of doctors will not admit that this was a clear vision of the Divine Essence, as I observed in my notes to the *Confessions* of Fray Alonso de Orozco, No. 25. Our author's affirmation is the same as that of Gerson, as reproduced by Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (*op. cit.*, folio 140):

Datur tamen nihilominus aliquando illis ad quandam puram et lucidam divinæ veritatis inspectionem pervenire, quod raro contigit, etc.

This doctrine is also accepted by the school of Scotus—namely, that there may be an abstractive species of the Divine Essence as It is, and that this, when communicated to the soul, will not cause an intuitive vision.

<sup>1</sup> [1 Corinthians v, 7.]

<sup>2</sup> Migne, *Patr. lat.*, Vol. XXXII, p. 774.

## PROPOSITION XXX

(Vol. III, p. 39)

This author says that 'it will come to pass that the holy soul in this life may be assailed by a seraph armed with a dart of most enkindled love, which will pierce that enkindled coal of fire, the soul.' And later he says: 'If the effect of the wound should sometimes be permitted to pass outward to the bodily senses, to an extent corresponding to the interior wound, the effect of the impact and the wound will be felt without, as came to pass when the seraph wounded Saint Francis. He wounded him with love in his soul and in that way the effect of those wounds became outwardly visible.'

37. This is a very true doctrine founded upon the saying of the Bride *Vulnerata caritate ego sum*, from which Saint Augustine drew those words: *Sagitta vexas tu domine cor meum caritate tua*. This doctrine was expounded by Fray Alonso de Orozco in the *Mount of Contemplation* (folio 138, p. 1). The fifth degree that is experienced by the soul in contemplation consists in its total alienation from itself by reason of its great love for its Beloved, Jesus Christ; for which reason it says with Saint Paul: I live, yet not I, but my Saviour, Jesus Christ, liveth in me.

This is a death most sweet and sacred, preceded by the wound and the sickness whereof we have spoken, and which he had described in writing of the third degree of contemplation. It is also the express doctrine of the holy Mother, in the *Book of her Life*, Chapter xxix, where she relates that which happened to her in the vision of the seraph with the dart, wherewith he enkindled and wounded her heart.

In his hands I saw a long golden spear, and at the end of the iron tip I seemed to see a point of fire. With this he seemed to pierce my heart several times, so that it penetrated to my entrails. When he drew it out, I thought he was drawing them out with it and he left me completely afire with a great love for God. The pain was so sharp that it made me utter several moans; and so excessive was the sweetness caused me by this intense pain that one can never wish to lose it, nor will one's soul be content with anything less than God. It is not bodily pain, but spiritual, though the body has a share in it—indeed, a great share.<sup>1</sup>

It may be noted that Saint Francis was wounded in his soul before

<sup>1</sup> [C.W.S.T.J., I, 192-3.]

being wounded in his body. The effects, then, that Christ Our Lord caused in the bodies of the saints were first caused in their souls; and the wound which Saint Augustine said that his heart experienced through the love of God appeared as a wound in his body. This is affirmed by several weighty authors, among them Fray Juan de los Angeles in the book entitled *The Triumphs of Love*, where he quotes from Saint Bonaventura concerning this opinion.

The fact that the Illuminists have taken upon their lips the language of the love which wounds the soul does not make that language suspect, for they are traitors who have clad their thoughts in the words of spiritual persons that they may the better deceive. If in addition to the language of the spiritual persons whom they quote they had had their spirituality and lived their lives, they would never have uttered such nonsense.

### PROPOSITION XXXI

(Vol. III, p. 44)

**This author says: 'This touch is most substantial and the Substance of God touches the substance of the soul. To this state many holy men have attained in this life.'**

38. With respect to the matter of the suspension of the soul so that it cannot work, this has been already expounded under Proposition III, in the words of the same author, a fact which the censors fail to notice in examining the very propositions in which these words are stated so clearly. With regard to the most substantial nature of this touch, and its touching the substance of the soul, this is not so unintelligible<sup>1</sup> as it seems to certain persons, for it is not a theologically improbable opinion that postulates an intimate ecstatic relation with the soul, and its probability is demonstrated by a weighty author of our own time. In order to expound and defend our author, however, we need not have recourse to that doctrine. Our author describes this touch as most substantial because it is immediate and comes to pass without mediation of any creature. It is God Who of Himself speaks and works and awakens the soul so that it may work quite clearly. The saints have described the union of the body of Christ with our bodies, in the Sacrament, as real, natural and substantial, in order to show the truth of this union and conjunction, and to indicate that it comes from no created quality, such as the quality produced in the

<sup>1</sup> [The Spanish has 'intelligible,' evidently an error.]

soul by grace. And thus the mystics describe this touch and union as most substantial, for it comes directly from God, *sine media creatura*, an opinion which is not deserving of censure.

### PROPOSITION XXXII

(Vol. III, p. 67)

**In treating of the impediments which the soul may experience so that it cannot reach perfect union with God, our author describes the first as being the spiritual master. 'It is of great importance for the soul that desires to profit, and not to fall back, to consider in whose hands it is placing itself. . . for there is hardly anyone who in all respects will guide the soul perfectly along the highest stretch of the road, or even along the intermediate stretches.'**

39. In this proposition our author demands certain characteristics of the master who guides and teaches the soul so that it may make progress upon this road of perfect prayer; he says that there are few who can guide the soul on this road. Consider here what I have quoted above (§ 20) from the holy Mother, and these words of Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires (*op. cit.*, folio 118, p. 1), where he is quoting Saint Bernard:

Multi fuere perfecti in theologia mystica absque speculativa, nunquam tamen theologus aliquis speculativus tantum culmen perfectionis est adeptus, immo nec perfectus extitit in ipsa acquisita theologia sine mystica.

Here he adds many good words. And in the same book (folio 138, p. 1) he says:

Hæc mystica sapientia quam Dionysius proprie Christianorum vocat, citius ac sublimius idiotis simplicibusque, qui nihil aliud quam salutem in timore et tremore curant, quam eruditis theologis conferre solet, nisi ipsi toto mentis affectu humilitati studeant.

On folio 140, he quotes an admirable passage from Gerson on the same matter.

Because this author demands a master who is skilled in this matter he must not be classed with the Illuminists, who said that there were no masters save their own, who shared their grossness. This author denies not that mystical theology may be examined by means of speculative theology, although not all speculative theologians are fitted

to examine it, as is very clearly affirmed by Fray Bartolomé de los Mártires in the passage already quoted. This explanation will serve also as an exposition of Proposition XXXIII.

### PROPOSITION XXXIII

What trials the holy Mother endured from the masters into whose hands she fell, until she found one who understood her spiritual nature, is evident from what I related in the first paragraph, and from what the holy Mother says in her books continually. As for the attribution to this author of the denial of works of virtue to the contemplative, this has been expounded in Proposition III, from the discussion of which there also follows the defence of Propositions XXXIV, XXXV and XXXVI.

### PROPOSITIONS XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVI, XXXVII

(Vol. III, p. 71)

This author says: 'Set the soul in the liberty of serene peace, and draw it away from the yoke and slavery of its operations, which is the captivity of Egypt, for all this is little more than gathering straw to make bricks; and to lead the soul to the promised land flowing with milk and honey.'

40. From Proposition III we have already seen what are these operations from which it is said that God draws the contemplative away; they are the operations of the inward and the outward senses and of discursive reasonings. These he calls slavery, for they are an imperfect kind of operation, as the saints and spiritual men continually affirm, and as is clear from many of the passages cited above, and the soul at that time is enjoying serene peace. I know not why this should be madness, temerity, error, blasphemy, abuse or heresy. So grave and severe a censure would require very clear demonstration, for that state in which for a time there dwells serenity and peace and some kind of security is witnessed to by the saints and doctors whom I quoted under Proposition VI (§ 25); from which we infer that, for the whole of its life and for as long as it remains in the world, the soul enjoys the highest peace. And that it should enjoy this for some time is not contrary to truth, nor to the saints, but is in close conformity with their

doctrine, as may also be gathered from what is said under Proposition XXVII (§ 34).

### PROPOSITIONS XXXVIII, XXXIX

Proposition XXXVIII is expounded and defended under the heads of Propositions III and XVII. The same may be said of Proposition XXXIX, where it is clear what are the works which are said to impede and hinder perfect contemplation.

### PROPOSITION XL

**This author says that, as this transformation and union cannot be comprehended by human ability or sense, the soul must void itself completely and voluntarily, in so far as it is able, from all such affection and desire as it can contain; for who will take from God the power to do that which He wills in a soul that is resigned and stripped and annihilated?**

41. In this proposition the author is not treating of the suspension of discursive reasoning and the operations of the outward senses, which are discussed in other propositions, but of the soul's need to void and annihilate itself with respect to all its particular desires and affections of love, so that it may comply with the saying of Christ *Abneget semetipsum*, and so that it may be prepared for the favours of God, as is taught by saints and doctors, and as I have related above (§ 9).

42. If we assume what has been said above, and proved by the doctrine and testimony of saints and doctors and spiritual men, and if we assume likewise that all this doctrine is sound, good and in conformity with the Fathers of the Church, there appears to be no fit reason for the prohibition of this book. There are raised three principal objections to it: that it is of little utility, that its teaching is difficult, and that harm has come from such books having been placed in the hands of women. All these objections were raised to the books of the holy Mother, which contain the same doctrine as the books of this author, and to all these objections Father-Master Fray Luis de León replied in his apologia. I propose to set down here his own words, which will also serve as a reply.

43. With regard to the question of utility, he writes as follows: 'In order to show that this is calumny, I presuppose that the Prayer of Union is a suspension of the soul with God, which comes to pass when the soul is at prayer and is reasoning with its understanding. God, applying to the soul His light and His power, draws it to Himself and suspends the reasoning of its understanding, enkindling its will by means of unitive love. This presupposed, I assert that this writer speaks truly of union in these books, explaining what it is, wherein it consists, the good effects which it produces and the way wherein it may be known if it is true or false. If this is to teach union, these books certainly teach it. But, I ask, what harm can be caused by such teaching, or how is it unseemly? For if it be said that there is no such kind of prayer, this is a most false assertion and contrary to what the saints write about it and to the truth of the faith. For it is clear from Holy Scripture that there is a prayer of rapture or ecstasy, and if this be so there is also a prayer which we call that of union. And if it be said, as no doubt it will be said, that there is such a prayer, it cannot be said that it is evil, since it is God Who gives it. And if there is such a prayer and it is good, how can it be wrong to treat of it, to describe its qualities, and to warn the soul of the errors which it is possible for persons to commit on this road lest they should commit them? And if it be said that this kind of prayer cannot be acquired by rules or precepts, that is profoundly true, and it is the first thing which these books point out; for they give no rules or precepts, but only admonish those who are concerned with prayer that, if they would reach this degree of prayer, they must live with great purity of conscience and that their hearts must always be detached from earthly things, and that they must always aspire to that which is most perfect—namely, the precepts and counsels of the Gospel.

'If, then, this road to union is good and perfect, it is good and necessary that there should be books which treat of it and describe its nature and the steps of its progress. How is it reasonable to condemn a book as evil if it is a guide to a road which is good? For, if it ought not to be written, this can only be because the road ought not to be known; and if this be so, it must be because it ought not to be trodden, which none will be so foolish and ignorant as to dare to assert. On the contrary, it is useful to tread this road, and therefore a knowledge of it is necessary, and, for the same reason, it is advantageous to write of it. Let the critics tell me who receives harm from a knowledge of union. Not those that have aught to do with it, for they obtain light

so that they may have a better knowledge of that wherewith they have to do. Those that have naught to do with it will of necessity conceive one of two things as a result of what they read here: either wonder at the gifts which God makes to His own children or the desire to follow this road and to leave all things that they may find God, Who is so great a Friend. Both these things are everywhere acknowledged to be useful. It seems that those who object to this have seen no other books on the same subject and are unaware that others have written of it. What an injustice it is to have misgivings about these writings and to fear their going into a thousand places? Let them see Saint Bonaventura, Richard of Saint Victor and John Gerson; and, if they desire to read in the vulgar tongue, let them see the third part of the books called the *Alphabets*.<sup>1</sup> There they will see that what the holy Mother says about this is little by comparison with what these authors say and write about it.'

To this defence, which may very appositely be applied to our author, I add that, in his first book, he treats in most learned fashion the subject of self-abnegation undertaken to the end that the soul may reach this kind of contemplation and union. Other authors, it is true, have treated of exterior abnegation, but none has described abnegation of an interior kind like this blessed Father, or given surer instruction, for the avoidance of error with regard to revelations, a matter which so preoccupies spiritual men and masters in spiritual things. To this day no book has been written comparable with this, as will be seen in practice by anyone who reads the second and third chapters of the first part. Since these two points are so essential in the spiritual life, and since this author treats them so minutely, he may be called the first writer in all Spain on this subject, and I know not how there can be any doubt concerning the utility of these books.

44. As to the second point, Fray Luis de León writes as follows: 'If this is an argument for the prohibition of these books, all books ought to be prohibited, for there are many places in which even those who lecture upon them cannot understand them. How many theologians, I may ask, understand the whole of Saint Augustine? And who is he that understands Saint Dionysius? And what I say of these writers I say of almost all the saints, who in many parts of their works speak, as it were, in Arabic, not only to those who know Latin and Greek, but even to those who profess theology and the Schoolmen. And not only the saints, but these same scholastic doctors are not completely

<sup>1</sup> [I.e., the *Third Spiritual Alphabet* of Francisco de Osuna.]

understood by their very disciples, who labour to expound them. Saint Thomas is not understood in many parts of his writings, still less is Scotus; the same also applies to Alexander, to Durango and to Henrico de Grandabo. Apart from this, the little that is written in these books harms nobody and profits many, for those who understand it profit by it and those who understand it not are neither harmed nor profited. Indeed it may be said that even those who understand them not profit by them, for their obscurity lies, not in their language, but in the nature of some of the things they say, which cannot be understood by those who have no experience of them. Yet, even without understanding them, such persons generally admire them and desire to share the experiences which they describe, and this is of great profit.'

45. As to the third matter—the harm which it is said these books have caused when they have fallen into the hands of some of these Illuminists—I assert, in the first place, that it is well known who are the persons that have expressly taught this evil doctrine and in whose teaching it has frequently been condemned—namely, in that of Fray Alonso de Mello, who deceived the town of Durango. Thus there was no need for them to seek this doctrine here, where they could not find it. If they wished to dissemble and authorize it by means of the doctrine of this book, maliciously understood, in this very fact there can be found an argument proving how good the book is, since men as evil as these Illuminists could find no better cloak to throw over their wickedness than the writings of a man of so pure and miraculous a life; with a less excellent cloak they would be unable to hide such great sins as their own and hypocrites are apt to cloak the greatest sins with the noblest virtues. Here I am adapting the words of Father-Master Fray Luis de León, in the apologia already quoted, where he replies to the calumniators of the books of the holy Mother, by referring to certain revelations which caused women to write about them, to desire them and to suffer illusions. He says as follows:

'But they say that in women, who are credulous, the desire for such things opens the door to the entrance of the devil, who is enabled to deceive them by means of illusions. The unruly desire for revelations may do this, but not reading about revelations which are good and true, and these books do nothing but take away such desires, as is clear from the books themselves. From reading, it is said, comes desire. If this is so, let the sacred books be censored, let ecclesiastical histories be burned and let the lives of the saints, the Dialogues of Saint Gregory and the revelations of those who founded religious

Orders and caused them to grow be torn in pieces. In such a case the Church has been deceived and all this time has written and recommended for reading that which opens the door to the devil. So that one who is a friend of himself or of his own excellence may have no occasion to be deceived, let the glory of God be hidden, let not His marvels be known and let this road be closed by which many have been encouraged to love and serve Him. How many have been moved by the honour which is paid to the saints to aim at becoming saints themselves? Let there, then, be no virtue; let not the virtuous acts of many persons be known and celebrated, lest hypocrites find occasion for sin in them. More hypocrites have fallen through such occasion than those who have been deluded by the devil through reading the revelations of God. In these things we must not consider the evil use made of them by a few, but the advantage of all. And the advantage of these writings, if prayer does not make it clear, can be demonstrated by experience, which is a faithful witness to them. Consider the friars and nuns of the Discalced Carmelite Order who have been nurtured in the doctrine of these books and know it by heart: consider if they are mad or deluded, or if there are any who excel them in the purity of true religion and sanctity of the love of God.'

I conclude this judgment by saying that to prohibit this book would be a very serious thing and that, by such an act, the reputation of the Holy Inquisition of Spain might well be greatly impaired. For, as the Discalced Carmelite Order is now treating of the beatification of this blessed Father, a matter which depends entirely upon the purity of his doctrine together with the purity of his life, if the Holy Office in Spain caused this book to be recalled the Order might well appeal to Rome and to the Holy Apostolic See: and, if this book were approved there, as it has been approved here by the University of Alcalá, and would be approved by many other Universities of good standing, it would be a great blow to the reputation of the Holy Inquisition in Spain that what it had done should be undone in Rome, and it would even prepare the way for further appeals to Rome in such matters, which would be a matter of common talk. All this makes it necessary to walk with great circumspection in this business. This I hold, and I have signed this document in Madrid, in the convent of Saint Philip, on the eleventh day of July, 1622.

FR. BASILIO PONCE DE LEÓN.  
*Prima Professor in Salamanca.*

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The translator here appends details of the principal editions of the works of St. John of the Cross, together with a selected list of books and articles which deal with his life and writings. Such books of reference as encyclopædias and histories of literature are omitted, as are also purely ephemeral articles, of which a large number appeared at the time of the quatercentenary (1942).

Descriptions of many of the editions will be found in the General Introduction to this translation and in the introductions to the individual works.

Long titles have been shortened, except where a work is of exceptional importance or of particular interest to English readers. Where several works have the same, or substantially the same, title, they are given in chronological order.

The Bibliography is divided into thirteen sections :

- I. Bibliographies.
- II. Spanish Editions of Collected Works (in chronological order).
- III. Spanish Editions of Single Works (in alphabetical order of titles).
- IV. Selected Translations into English.<sup>1</sup>
- V. Selected Translations into French.<sup>1</sup>
- VI. Selected Translations into German.<sup>1</sup>
- VII. Selected Translations into Italian.<sup>1</sup>
- VIII. Selected Translations into Dutch or Flemish.<sup>1</sup>
- IX. Selected Translations into Portuguese.<sup>1</sup>
- X. Selected Translations into Latin.<sup>1</sup>
- XI. Note on Translations into other languages.
- XII. Abridgements, Anthologies, etc. (arranged in the above order of languages, and, in each division, in alphabetical order).
- XIII. Commentaries.

In Section XIII both authors and their works are named in alphabetical order, except that a major work is occasionally given precedence over others. Long though this section is, no subdivisions have been made in it, because so many works would come into more than one of them. For the guidance

<sup>1</sup> In each of these sections editions of the *Complete Works* come first, followed by editions of individual works in alphabetical order of titles.

of those studying one particular aspect of the subject, however, the following marks are prefixed to the appropriate entries:

- \* Mainly biographical.
- \*\* Includes considerable biographical material.
- † Mainly literary.
- †† Has reference to the disputed authenticity of some parts of St. John of the Cross's works.

The following abbreviations are used (principally, though not exclusively in Section XIII), to denote periodicals referred to in this Bibliography:

- A-A.* *Al-Andalus*. Madrid-Granada.
- A.C.* *Archivo Carmelitano*. Madrid.
- B.H.S.* *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*. Liverpool.
- B. Hisp.* *Bulletin Hispanique*. Bordeaux.
- B.S.S.* *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*. Liverpool.
- B.U.G.* *Boletín de la Universidad de Granada*.
- Bol. R. Ac. Esp.* *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*. Madrid.
- C.D.* *Ciudad de Dios*. Valladolid.
- C. y R.* *Cruz y Raya*. Madrid.
- C.T.* *Ciencia Tomista*. Salamanca.
- E.C.* *Etudes Carmélitaines*. Paris.
- Eph. C.* *Ephemerides Carmeliticæ*. Florence.
- Esc.* *Escorial*. Madrid.
- Est. F.* *Estudis Franciscans*. Barcelona.
- Et. F.* *Etudes Franciscaines*. Paris.
- H.R.* *Hispanic Review*. Philadelphia.
- J.T.S.* *Journal of Theological Studies*. Oxford.
- M.C.* *El Monte Carmelo*. Burgos.
- M.S.T.* *Mensajero de Santa Teresa y de San Juan de la Cruz*. Madrid.
- Man.* *Manresa*. Bilbao.
- N.R.T.* *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*. Tournai-Louvain.
- R.A.M.* *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*. Toulouse.
- R.E.T.* *Revista Española de Teología*. Madrid.
- R. Esp.* *Revista de Espiritualidad*. San Sebastián (Nos. 1-5), Madrid.
- R.F.* *Razón y Fe*. Madrid.
- R.F.E.* *Revista de Filología Española*. Madrid.
- R.F.H.* *Revista de Filología Hispánica*. Buenos Aires.
- R.V.S.* *Rivista di Vita Spirituale*. Rome.
- R. y C.* *Religión y Cultura*. El Escorial.
- V. Car.* *Vita Carmelitana*. Rome.
- V. Sob.* *Vida Sobrenatural*. Salamanca.
- V. Sp.* *Vie Spirituelle*. Paris.
- V.V.* *Verdad y Vida*. Madrid.
- Z.A.M.* *Zeitschrift für Ascese und Mystik*. Innsbruck.

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## II. SPANISH EDITIONS OF COLLECTED WORKS

(in chronological order)

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(9) *Obras espirituales que encaminan a una alma a la perfecta unión con Dios*. Por el Venerable P. F. Juan de la Cruz, primer Descalzo de la Reforma de Nuestra Señora del Carmen. Barcelona, Sebastián de Cormellas, 1619. (A corrected reprint of No. 8.)

(10) *Obras del Venerable y místico Doctor Fray Juan de la Cruz*. Madrid, Viuda de Madrigal, 1630. (This edition contains the author's biography by its editor, Fr. Jerónimo de San José. The *Cántico espiritual* appears in the Works for the first time in Spain.)

(11) *Obras, etc.* Barcelona, Sebastián de Cormellas, 1635. (Substantially a reprint of No. 10.)

(12) *Obras del Venerable y místico Doctor Fray Juan de la Cruz*. Madrid, Gregorio Rodríguez, 1649. (Enlarged edition, including nine letters, one hundred sentences and some poems. Cf. Vol. I, p. liv, of this translation.)

This edition was reprinted:

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(14) Madrid, 1679.

(15) Barcelona, Vicente Suria, 1693. (Adds the *Cautelas*.)

(16) Madrid, Julián de Paredes, 1694, 2 vols.

(17) *Obras, etc.* Madrid, Barcelona, 1700.

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(19) *Obras espirituales que encaminan a un alma a la más perfecta unión con Dios con transformación de amor*. Seville, Francisco de Leefdael, 1703. (Includes an outline Life of St. John of the Cross, by the editor, Andrés de Jesús María.)

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(in alphabetical order of titles)

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(36) *Autógrafos que se conservan del místico doctor San Juan de la Cruz, (Los)*. Edición fototipográfica por el P. Gerardo de San Juan de la Cruz, C.D. Toledo, 1913.

(37) (SPANISH AND FRENCH TEXTS) *Les Avis, Sentences et Maximes de Saint Jean de la Croix, Docteur de l'Eglise*. Ed. Dom Ph. Chevallier, O.S.B. (Paris, Bruges), 1933. (See review in *B. Hisp.*, 1934, XXXVI, 110-15.)

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(45) *Cautelas de nuestro extático padre y doctor místico San Juan de la Cruz, etc.* Valencia, 1687.

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(48) *Cautelas, avisos, sentencias y poetas*. Ed. P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, C.D. Burgos, 1933. (Text follows that of No. 30.)

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(51) (*Suma espiritual*) . . . *Avisos y sentencias, etc.* Burgos, 1904. (Sec No. 176.)

#### CÁNTICO ESPIRITUAL

(52) *Declaración de las Canciones que tratan del ejercicio de amor entre el alma y el esposo Cristo, en la cual se tocan, y declaran, algunos puntos y efectos de oración*. Por el V. P. Fray Juan de la Cruz, etc. Brussels, Godefredo Schoevarts, 1627.

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(68) *Poetas*. Recopilación y prólogo del P. Gerardo de San Juan de la Cruz. Madrid, 1921. ('Letras españolas.')

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(71) *Poetas, etc*. Segovia, PP. Carmelitas Descalzos, 1929.

(72) *Poetas*. Ed. E. Allison Peers. Liverpool, 1933.

(73) *Poestas completas, versos comentados, avisos y sentencias, cartas*. Ed., prólogo y notas de Pedro Salinas. Madrid, 1936. (Contains the complete poems, selections from the prose commentaries to the *Cántico espiritual* and *Llama de amor viva*, and selected maxims and letters. Text follows that of No. 30.)

(74) *Poestas completas*. Ed. Luis Guarner. Valencia, 1941.

(75) *Obra poética seguida de fragmentos de sus Declaraciones*. Prólogo de M. Manent. Barcelona, 1942.

(76) *Poestas completas de San Juan de la Cruz*. Prólogo y revisión de A. Valbuena Prat. Barcelona, 1942.

(77) *Poestas*. Ed. de gran lujo. Barcelona, 1943. (Limited edition, with illustrations.)

(78) *Poestas*. Buenos Aires, 1943.

(79) *Poestas completas y otras páginas*. Selección, estudio y notas por José Manuel Blecuá. Zaragoza, 1946. (Clásicos Ebro.)

(80) (SPANISH AND ENGLISH TEXTS) *Poems of Saint John of the Cross*. With English translations by E. Allison Peers. London, 1947.

(81) (SPANISH AND FRENCH TEXTS) *Trois poèmes majeurs de Saint Jean de la Croix*. Ed. P. Darmangeat. Paris, 1947.

(82) (SPANISH AND FRENCH TEXTS) *Poèmes mystiques*. Texte espagnol et version française de Benoît Lavaud. Neuchâtel, 1948.

(83) (SPANISH AND ENGLISH TEXTS) *The Poems of St. John of the Cross*. The Spanish text with a translation by Roy Campbell. London, 1951.

(See also No. 511.)

#### IV. SELECTED TRANSLATIONS INTO ENGLISH

(See also Nos. 80, 83)

(84) *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross*. Translated from the original Spanish by D. Lewis. Edited by the Oblate Fathers of S. Charles. With a preface by Cardinal Wiseman. London, 1864, 2 vols. (2nd ed., with biographical introduction, 1889.)

(According to P. Benno a S. Joseph (*Eph. C.*, 1947, I, 190-1), a similar edition was published in 1891, which he has seen and described. It is not in the British Museum. Presumably it was a reprint of the above.)

(85) *Complete Works of St. John of the Cross, Doctor of the Church*. Translated from the critical edition of P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, C.D., by E. Allison Peers. London, 1934-35, 3 vols.

(86) *Ascent of Mount Carmel*. Translated by David Lewis. With corrections, and a prefatory essay on the development of mysticism in the Carmelite

Order, by Benedict Zimmermann. London, 1906. (Other editions: London, 1914; London, 1918; London, 1922; London, 1928.)

(87) *Dark Night of the Soul*. Translated by Gabriela Cunninghame-Graham. London, 1905. (2nd ed., London, 1922.)

(88) *Dark Night of the Soul*. Translated by David Lewis. With corrections, and introductory essay by Benedict Zimmermann. London, 1908. (Other editions: London, 1916 (revised); London, 1924 (revised 'conformably to the best critical Spanish edition'); London, 1936.)

(89) *Instructions and precautions of St. John of the Cross, preceded by a short sketch of his life and followed by some spiritual letters to the nuns of his Order, etc.* Wheeling, W. Virginia, 1918.

(90) *Living Flame of Love. Letters, Poems and Minor Writings*. Translated by David Lewis. With an essay by Cardinal Wiseman, and additions and an introduction by Benedict Zimmermann. London, 1912. (Other editions: London, 1919; London, 1934.)

(91) *Poems of St. John of the Cross*. Text and translation by E. Allison Peers. (See No. 80.)

(92) *Poems of St. John of the Cross, The*. Text and translation by Roy Campbell. (See No. 83.)

(93) *Song of the Soul*. Translated by John O'Connor. Abergavenny, 1927.

(94) *Spiritual Canticle of the Soul*. Translated by David Lewis. With corrections and an introduction by Benedict Zimmermann. London, 1909. (Another edition: London, 1919.)

## V. SELECTED TRANSLATIONS INTO FRENCH

(See also Nos. 35, 37, 59, 69, 81, 82)

(95) *Œuvres spirituelles pour acheminer les âmes à la parfaite union avec Dieu*, traduites d'espagnol en français par M. R. Gaultier. Paris, 1621.

(96) *Œuvres spirituelles . . . Nouvellement revues par le R. P. Cyprien de la Nativité de la Vierge*. Paris, 1641, 2 vols. (No. 122 is a reprint of this text.)

(97) *Œuvres spirituelles . . . traduites par Cyprien de la Nativité*. Augmentées d'un traité théologique de l'âme avec Dieu par L. de Sainte Thérèse, et d'un éclaircissement des phrases de la théologie mystique du P. Jean de la Croix par Nicolas de Jésus-Marie. Paris, 1665. (See No. 96.)

(98) *Œuvres du bienheureux Jean de la Croix*. Traduction nouvelle par le père Jean Maillard, S.J. Paris, 1694. (Reprinted: Paris, 1695.)

(99) *Œuvres spirituelles*. Nouvelle édition augmentée des Lettres du P. Berthier sur la doctrine spirituelle de Saint Jean de la Croix, etc. Avignon, 1828, 3 vols. (Other editions: Avignon, 1834; Paris, 1846; Paris, 1849; Paris, 1862; Paris, 1864.)

(100) *Œuvres complètes* (Vol. III, Paris, 1845, pp. 363-760, of *Œuvres très-complètes de Sainte Thérèse . . . suivies . . . des œuvres complètes de . . . Saint Jean de la Croix, etc.* Paris, 1840-45, 4 vols.) (The translation is that of Jean Maillard.)

(101) *Œuvres spirituelles. . . Traduites par le Père Maillard.* Paris, 1864.

(102) *Œuvres complètes (Les) et la vie de Saint Jean de la Croix, premier Carme déchaussé et directeur de sainte Thérèse. Par Mgr. Gilly, évêque de Nîmes.* Paris, 1866-94, 4 vols.

(103) *Œuvres de Saint Jean de la Croix.* Traduites par Charles-Marie du Sacré Cœur, C.D. Toulouse, 1876.

(104) *Vie (par le P. Jérôme de S. Joseph) et Œuvres spirituelles de l'admirable docteur mystique le bienheureux père Saint Jean de la Croix.* Traduction nouvelle, faite sur l'édition de Séville, 1702, publiée par les soins des Carmélites de Paris. Paris, Poitiers, 1876, 4 vols. (2nd ed., Paris, Poitiers, 1890; 3rd ed., Paris, Poitiers, 1892-4; 4th ed., Paris, Poitiers, 1903; 5th ed., Paris, Poitiers, 1910; 6th ed., Paris, 1922; 7th ed., Tours, 1928; 8th ed., Tours, 1936.)

(105) *Œuvres spirituelles de St. Jean de la Croix.* Trad. H(ector) Hoor-naert. Lille, Desclée de Brouwer, 1915-18, 3 vols. (The title-page of each volume begins with the title of the individual work, the general title following it.) (2nd ed., Lille, 1922-3, 4 vols; 3rd ed., Bruges, Paris, 1927-8, 3 vols., with general title at head of title-page.)

(106) *Œuvres spirituelles.* Trad. P. Grégoire de S. Joseph, C.D. Monte Carlo, 1932-45, 7 vols. (2nd ed., Paris, 1947.)

(107) *Œuvres de saint Jean de la Croix, Docteur de l'Eglise et Père du Carmel réformé.* Trad. nouvelle par la mère Marie du Saint-Sacrement, C.D. Bar-le-Duc, 1933-7, 4 vols.

(108) *Œuvres spirituelles du bienheureux père Jean de la Croix, premier Carme déchaussé . . . et coadjuteur de la sainte mère Thérèse de Jésus.* Traduites d'espagnol en français par le R. P. Cyprien de la Nativité de la Vierge, C.D. Ed. nouvelle par le P. Lucien-Marie de S. Joseph, C.D. Bruges, Desclée de Brouwer, 1942, 2 vols. (Uses P. Silverio's critical ed. in the revision.) 2nd ed., Bruges, 1947. 3rd ed., Paris, 1949.

(109) (*Œuvres.*) *La Montée du Carmel. La Nuit obscure et la Vive Flamme d'amour.* Trad. H(ector) Hoor-naert. Ed. revue et complétée. Buenos Aires, Montreal, 1944, 3 vols.

(110) *Avis et maximes sur la vie spirituelle. . . .* Trad. publiée par les soins des Carmélites d'Aire sur l'Adour. Tarbes, 1895.

(III) *Avis, sentences et maximes.* Trad. Dom Philippe Chevallier. Paris, Bruges, 1933. (See No. 127.)

(112) *Canciones, nouvellement traduits par René-Louis Doyon, avec une étude sur la poésie de l'amour mystique.* Paris, 1920.

(113) *Cantique d'amour divin entre Jésus-Christ et l'âme dévote.* Composé en espagnol par le B. Père Jean de la Croix, etc. Traduit par M. René Gaultier, Conseiller d'Etat. Paris, Taupinart, 1622.

(114) *Cantique spirituel (Le) et la Vive Flamme d'amour.* Trad. nouvelle faite sur l'édition de Séville, 1702. Ed. augmentée des lettres du P. Berthier sur la doctrine spirituelle de Saint Jean de la Croix et d'une analyse de ses œuvres en deux sermons, par Mgr. Landriot. Paris, 1875, 2 vols.

(115) *Cantique spirituel de St. Jean de la Croix (Le).* Ed. Dom Ph. Chevalier. (See No. 61.)

(116) *Cantique spirituel (Le), ode d'amour divin entre Jésus-Christ et l'âme dévote,* trad. et présenté par Jean Descola. Paris, n.d. (1932).

(117) *Cantique spirituel.* Traduction du texte espagnol. Bruges, Desclée de Brouwer, 1933. (Republication of part of No. 61.)

(118) *Cantique d'amour divin entre Jésus-Christ et l'âme dévote.* Paris, Eds. du Raisin (1944).

(119) *Cantique spirituel.* Chansons entre l'âme et l'époux. Traduction de Rolland Simon. Algiers, 1945.

(120) *Cantique spirituel entre l'âme et Jésus-Christ son époux, composé par S. Jean de la Croix.* Traduit par le R. P. Cyprien. Paris, 1947.

(121) *Cantique spirituel.* Texte du MS. de Jaén. Traduit par G. Lévis-Mano. Paris, 1947.

(122) *Cantiques spirituels de Saint Jean de la Croix.* Nouvellement revus et corrigés sur l'original, par le R. P. Cyprien de la Nativité de la Vierge, et traduits en vers français par le même. Paris, 1917.

(123) *Cantiques spirituels.* Avec la traduction en vers français du R. P. Cyprien de la Nativité de la Sainte Vierge, recueillis et présentés par Rafael Tasis. Paris, 1946.

(124) *Maximes spirituelles.* Paris, 1850. (Appended to F. de Lamennais' translation of Louis de Blois: *Le Guide spirituel, ou le Miroir des âmes religieuses.* Reprinted, Paris, 1860. New ed., Paris, 1927.)

(125) *Maximes et avis spirituels, etc.* Traduits pour la première fois en français sur l'édition espagnole de 1702 par un père de la Compagnie de Jésus. Paris, 1875.

(126) *Maximes et avis spirituels.* Publié par les Carmélites de Paris. Paris-Poitiers, 1895.

(127) *Mots d'ordre de Saint Jean de la Croix, docteur de l'Eglise (Les),* ed. Dom Ph. Chevallier. Paris, 1933. (Described as complementary to the *Avis, sentences et maximes* (Bruges, 1933). 'Offre logiquement groupées

toutes les pensées venues des cahiers, des réponses et des billets du Saint.' (2nd ed., Solesmes, 1947.)

(128) *Poèmes mystiques de St. Jean de la Croix*. Prologue de Maurice Brillant. Paris, 1922.

(129) *Poèmes mystiques (Les)* . . . trad. Lucien-Marie de Saint-Joseph, C.D. Paris, Bruges, 1943.

(130) *Trois Poèmes de Saint Jean de la Croix adaptés en français*. Trad. Armand Godoy. Paris, 1937.

(131) *Précautions spirituelles, avis et maximes*. Trad. P. Grégoire de Saint-Joseph, C.D. Rennes, 1919.

(132) *Vive Flamme d'amour (La) et la déclaration des cantiques qui traitent de la plus intime union et transformation de l'âme en Dieu*. . . . Trad. par le R. P. Cyprien de la Nativité de la Vierge. Paris, Chevallier, 1641.

## VI. SELECTED TRANSLATIONS INTO GERMAN

(See also No. 56)

(133) *Die Sämmtliche Schriften des heiligen Johann vom Kreuz*. Prague, 1697.

(134) *Die Sämmtliche Schriften, etc.* herausgegeben von Gallus Schwab. Sulzbach, 1830, 2 vols.

(135) *Leben und Werke des heiligen Johannes vom Kreuz, ersten Barfüßsen-Karmeliten zum ersten Male vollständig aus dem spanischen*. Originale übersetzt von Peter Lechner. Regensburg, 1858-9, 3 vols.

(136) *Des heiligen Johannes vom Kreuz Sämmtliche Werke*. Neue deutsche Ausgabe von P. Aloysius ab Immac. Conceptione und P. Ambrosius a S. Theresia, C.D. München, 1924-9, 5 vols.

(137) *Aufstieg zum Berge Karmel, oder der Weg zur vollkommnen Vereinigung der Seele mit Gott*. (Trans. L. Stocker, O.S.B.) Graz, 1891.

(138) *Sämmtliche Gedichte des heiligen Johannes vom Kreuz und der heiligen Theresia von Jesus*. Gesammelt und übersetzt von W. Storck. Münster, 1854.

## VII. SELECTED TRANSLATIONS INTO ITALIAN

(139) *Opere spirituali che conducono l'anima alla perfetta unione con Dio*, composte dal ven. P. F. Giovanni della Croce, etc. Tradotte dalla spagnuola in questa nostra lingua italiana dal P. Fr. Alessandro di S. Francesco, Definitore Generale della Congregatione d'Italia. Rome, 1627.

- (140) *Opere spirituali . . . , nelle quali s'insegna la vera strada, che conduce anima alla perfetta e soave unione con Dio, etc.* Venice, 1643.
- (141) *Opere spirituali, etc.* Venice, 1658. (Reproduces No. 140.)
- (142) *Opere spirituali, etc.* Venice, 1680.
- (143) *Opere spirituali, etc.* Venice, 1682. (Reproduces No. 140.)
- (144) *Opere spirituali, etc.* Venice, 1683. (Reproduces No. 140.)
- (145) *Opere spirituali, etc.* Venice, Poletti, 1707. (Reproduces No. 140.)
- (146) *Opere spirituali, etc.* Venice, 1729. (Reproduces No. 140.)
- (147) *Opere di San Giovanni della Croce, etc.* Trad. P. Marcos di San Francesco. Venice, 1747.
- (148) *Opere di San Giovanni della Croce, etc.* Venice, Angelo Geremia, 1748, 2 vols. (Reproduces No. 147.)
- (149) *Opere di San Giovanni della Croce.* Trad. dal P. F. Marco de San Francesco. Genoa, 1858-9, 2 vols.
- (150) *Opere spirituali.* Trad. Paolo de Töth. Milan, 1912, 2 vols. (2nd ed., Acquapendente, 1927, 2 vols.)
- (151) *Opere tradotte a cura dell'ordine dei carmelitani scàlzi* (dal R. P. Nazareno dell'Addolorata, C.D.). Milan, 1927-9, 3 vols. (2nd ed., Rome, 1940, 1 vol.)
- (152) *Opere complete di S. Giovanni della Croce.* Trad. R. P. Nazareno dell'Addolorata, O.C.D. Firenze, 1948.
- (153) *Aforismi e poesie.* Testo spagnuolo con introduzione e versione a cura di Giuseppe de Luca. Brescia, 1933.
- (154) *Avvisi e massime.* Milan, 1924.
- (155) *Cantico spirituale (II)*, a cura di Guido Manacorda. Florence, n.d. (?1946).
- (156) *Cantico spirituale*, a cura del R. P. Nazareno dell'Addolorata. Torino, 1947.
- (157) *Cantico spirituale.* Introduzione e versione a cura del P. Gabriele di S. Maria Maddalena. Florence, 1948.
- (158) *Cautele, avvisi e massime spirituali.* Rome, 1940.
- (159) (*Disciplina claustrale . . . con. . .*) *Cautele e sentenze spirituali.* Firenze, 1893.

#### VIII. SELECTED TRANSLATIONS INTO DUTCH OR FLEMISH

- (160) *Geestelijke Werken, etc.* Antwerp, 1637.
- (161) *Verhole Wercken van den Salighenende verlichten heeræn Johannes van den Cruyce*, overgheset door Servatius van den H. Petrus, O. Carm. Ghent, 1693-1703.

(162) *Geestelijke Werken van den H. Johannes a Cruce* . . . uit her spaansch vertaald . . . door P. Fr. Henricus a S. Familia, C.D. Ghent, 1916-19, 3 vols. (2nd ed., Brussels, 1931-2, 3 vols.)

(163) *Geestelijke raadgevingen en leerspreuken van den heiligen Johannes a Cruce* . . . vertaald door P. Fr. Henricus a S. Familia, C.D. Ghent, 1917. (From the translation in No. 162.)

(164) *Voorzorgen tegen wereld, duivel, vleesch, door sint Jan van het Kruis*. Ghent, 1924. Trans. by P. Coelestinus a S. Joseph, C.D.

## IX. SELECTED TRANSLATIONS INTO PORTUGUESE

(165) *Obras de são João da Cruz, doutor da Igreja*, trad. pelas carmelitas descalças do . . . Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro, 1946.

(166) *Obras espirituais*. (Trans. by the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Fatima.) Fatima, 1947.

(167) 'Avisos e sentenças espirituais. Quatro avisos a um religioso para alcançar a perfeição. Cautelas.' In *Doutrina de Sta. Teresa e S. João da Cruz*. Oporto, 1943.

## X. SELECTED TRANSLATIONS INTO LATIN

(168) *Opera mystica*. . . ex Hispanico idiomate in latinum nunc primum translata per R. P. Fr. Andrean a Jesu, Polonum eiusdem Ordinis Religiosum. Elucidatio phrasium mysticæ theologiæ auctore Nicolas a Jesu Maria. Cologne, 1622. (Reprinted Cologne, 1639; Cologne, 1710.)

## XI. NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS INTO OTHER LANGUAGES

Other versions given by P. Benno (No. 2) are:

(169) Bohemian (22: I, 198).

(170) Hungarian (38: I, 370; 88-90: III, 421-2).

(171) Polish (46-7: I, 380-1; 69: III, 416; 97: III, 423-4).

## XII. ABRIDGEMENTS, ANTHOLOGIES, ETC.

### SPANISH

(172) *Antología literaria*. Salamanca, 1927.

(173) *Antología de San Juan de la Cruz*. Ed. J. Domínguez Berrueta. Madrid, 1941.

- (174) *Páginas escogidas*. Ed. F. Gutiérrez. Barcelona, 1940.  
 (175) *Selección y nota de Ramón Sijé*. In *C. y R.*, 1933, No. 9, pp. 86-100.  
 (176) *Suma espiritual de San Juan de la Cruz*. Ed. Ángel María de Santa Teresa. Burgos, 1904.

## ENGLISH

- (177) *The Mystical Doctrine of St. John of the Cross*. An Abridgement made by C(harles) H(enrion). London, 1934. (Reprinted, 1946.) (Trans. from No. 181.)  
 (178) *A Retreat under the guidance of St. John of the Cross*. By M. Mary of the Blessed Sacrament. London, 1930.  
 (179) *The Spirit of St. John of the Cross*. Consisting of his maxims, sayings and spiritual advice on various subjects. Trans. Canon Dalton. London, 1863.  
 (180) *Thoughts of St. John of the Cross for every day*. Compiled by Kathleen Mary Balfe. London, 1924.

## FRENCH

- (181) *Abrégé de toute la doctrine mystique de Saint Jean de la Croix*. Ed. Charles Henrion. St. Maximin (Var), 1925.  
 (182) *Abrégé de la doctrine de Saint Jean de la Croix*. Ed. Charles Henrion. Paris, 1947.  
 (183) *Selections*. In M. de Wasmer: *Huit mystiques espagnols*. Paris, 1940.  
 (184) *Sentences spirituelles choisies des œuvres de . . . sainte Thérèse de Jésus et du . . . Père Saint Jean de la Croix*. Par le R. P. Ange de S. Joseph. N.p., 1846.

## ITALIAN

- (185) *Compendio della mistica teologia di S. Giovanni della Croce*. Opera inedita di un padre Carmelitano scalzo. Siena, 1886.

## XIII. COMMENTARIES

- (186) \*Anon: *Life of Saint John of the Cross of the Order of Our Lady o Mount Carmel*. London, 1873.  
 (187) \*Anon: *Vita del mistico dottore S. Giovanni dalla Croce, primo Carmelitano Scalzo*. Treviso, 1837.  
 (188) \*Anon: *Vida de San Juan de la Cruz*, por un socio del Apostolado. Madrid, 1913. (Contains also some poems.)  
 (189) A.: 'En torno al misticismo poético de San Juan de la Cruz.' In *Basilica Teresiana*, 1916, pp. 228-47.

- (190) A.M.: 'San Juan en Francia.' In *Esc.*, 1942, IX, 366-8.
- (191) \*A. de la P.: *San Juan de la Cruz*. Madrid, 1928. (Contains also the poems.)
- (192) Adolfo de la Madre de Dios, C.D.: 'Estado y acto de contemplación. La contemplación adquirida según San Juan de la Cruz.' In *R. Esp.*, 1949, VIII, 96-126.
- (193) Alaejos, Abilio, C.M.F.: 'Hispanidad de la mística de San Juan de la Cruz.' In *R. Esp.*, 1948, VII, 281-324.
- (194) \*Alessandro di Santa Teresa, C.D.: *Terzo Centenario di San Giovanni della Croce. . . . Vita dello stesso*. Rome, 1891.
- (195) †Alonso, Dámaso: 'La caza de amor es de altanería. Sobre los precedentes de una poesía de San Juan de la Cruz.' In *Bol. R. Ac. Esp.*, 1947, XXVI, 63-79.
- (196) †Alonso, Dámaso: 'El misterio técnico en la poesía de San Juan de la Cruz.' In *Poesía española*. Madrid, 1950, pp. 227-321.
- (197) †Alonso, Dámaso: *La Poesía de San Juan de la Cruz (Desde esta ladera)*. Madrid, 1942. 2nd ed., Madrid, 1946. (Contains also the text of the poems and selections from the prose commentaries upon them. See reviews in *B. Hisp.*, 1944, XLVI, 95-101; *R.F.H.*, 1943, V, 377-95.)
- (198) †Alonso, Dámaso: 'Sobre el texto "Aunque es de noche."' In *R.F.E.*, 1942, XXVI, 490-4.
- (199) Alonso, Joaquín María, C.M.F.: 'Biblia y mística en San Juan de la Cruz.' In *R. Esp.*, 1950, IX, 330-57.
- (200) Alphonse de la Mère des Douleurs: *Pratique de l'oraison mentale et de la perfection d'après Sainte Térèse et Saint Jean de la Croix*. Paris, Lille, Bruges, 1909-14, 8 vols. (Sp. trans. of Vol. I, Barcelona, 1911.)
- (201) Anastasio María de San José, C.D.: *Somma di mistica teologia* compilata cogli scritti del Santo tradotti dallo spagnuolo ed annotati da Fr., etc. Parma, 1904.
- (202) Andrés de Jesús María, C.D.: *Compendio de la vida de San Juan de la Cruz*. First published in the edition of 1703 (No. 19), and in P. Gerardo's edition (No. 27), I, 7-154.
- (203) Aniceto del D. Redentor, C.D.: 'La inhabitación de la Santísima Trinidad en el alma, según San Juan de la Cruz.' In *R. Esp.*, 1943, II, 37-49.
- (204) Antonio, Nicolás: In *Bibliotheca Hispana*. Roma, 1672, I, 517-18.
- (205) Arbiol, Antonio: *Mística fundamental de Cristo Señor nuestro*. Explicado por el glorioso y beato Padre San Juan de la Cruz. Zaragoza, 1723. (Other editions: Barcelona, 1748; Madrid, 1761.)

- (206) Ariceta, Lucas, O.F.M.: 'El hábito infuso de contemplación en San Juan de la Cruz.' In *V.V.*, 1949, VII, 501-51.
- (207) Arintero, Juan G., O.P.: 'Influencia de Santo Tomás en la mística de San Juan de la Cruz y Santa Teresa.' In *V. Sob.*, 1924, VIII, 21-42.
- (208) Asín Palacios, Miguel: 'Un precursor hispano-musulmán de San Juan de la Cruz.' (Ibn 'Abbād de Ronda, 1332-89.) In *A.A.*, 1933, I, 7-79. Also in *Huellas de Islam*, Madrid, 1941, pp. 235-304, and in *Obras escogidas*, Madrid, 1946, I, 243-326. (Fr. tr. in *E.C.*, 1932, XVII (i), 113-67.)
- (209) Athanase de l'Immaculée-Conception: *Traité des épines de l'esprit de Saint Jean de la Croix*. Trad. de l'espagnol. Paris, 1896.
- (210) Azorín (José Martínez Ruiz): 'Un sensitivo.' In *Los Valores literarios*. Madrid, 1913, pp. 55-9.
- (211) \*\*Baruzi, Jean: *Saint Jean de la Croix et le problème de l'expérience mystique*. Paris, 1924. (2nd ed., with fresh preface, Paris, 1931.)
- (212) Baruzi, Jean: 'Le problème des citations scripturaires en langue latine dans l'œuvre de Saint Jean de la Croix.' In *B. Hisp.*, 1922, XXIV, 18-40.
- (213) Baruzi, Jean: 'Saint Jean de la Croix.' In M. Gorce and R. Mortier: *Histoire générale des religions*. Paris, 1947.
- (214) †Bataillon, Marcel: 'Sur la genèse poétique du *Cantique spirituel* de Saint Jean de la Croix.' In *Estudios de filología e historia literaria* (Homenaje al R. P. Félix Restrepo, S.J.). Bogotá, 1950, pp. 251-63.
- (215) †Bayo, Marcial José: 'Aspecto lírico de San Juan de la Cruz.' In *R. Esp.*, 1942, I, 300-8.
- (216) Behn, J.: 'San Juan de la Cruz.' In *Stimmen der Zeit*, 1938, CXXXIII, 216-36.
- (217) Bell, A. F. G.: 'Saint John of the Cross, a portrait.' In *B.S.S.*, 1930, VII, 13-21.
- (218) Benjamin de la Trinité, C.D.: 'Education sanjuaniste.' In *Sanjuanística* (No. 509), pp. 305-66.
- (219) ††Bernadot, M-V., O.P.: 'Le texte authentique du *Cantique spirituel* de Saint Jean de la Croix.' In *V. Sp.*, 1923, Supplément, VII, 154-61.
- (220) Bernhardt, W.: 'Der Urquell, ein Gesang des hl. Johannes vom Kreuze.' In *Z.A.M.*, 1933, VIII, 322-9.
- (221) Besse, Ludovic de: *Eclaircissements sur les œuvres mystiques de Saint Jean de la Croix*. Paris, 1893. (Reprinted, Paris, 1928.)
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# INDICES

## I. SUBJECT-INDEX TO THE WORKS OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

[*Note*.—This index and those which follow have been made by the editor of the present edition and cover the whole of the text (with the exception of the pages (II, 385-408) showing the Granada variants from the Sanlúcar Codex of the *Spiritual Canticle* and those (II, 417-25) giving in verse form the poems indexed elsewhere), together with the introductions and notes where stated. In the subject-index anything approaching exhaustiveness is of course impossible to attain within small compass, since such themes as Night, Purgation, Union, Virtues occur on many hundreds of pages. For this reason the cross-references given in italics after numerous headings should be used freely.

Readers desiring a fuller subject-index should consult Luis de San José, C.D.: *Concordancias de las obras y escritos de . . . San Juan de la Cruz* (Burgos, 1948), which can be used with this edition, since the chapter and paragraph numberings in both follow P. Silverio.]

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[*Note.*—Twentieth-century writers are not included, nor, with a few exceptions, are religious of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries except those whose writings or depositions are quoted, mentioned or reproduced. References are not given to the Bibliography. Religious of the Carmelite Order and all saints are indexed under their Christian names; other persons under their surnames.]

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